Sir
Andrew Wylie
of
that ilk

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WORKS OF JOHN GALT

SIR ANDREW WYLIE.
First Edition published in Three Volumes, 12mo, 1822.

It might be as well if you would take me into partnership.

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SIR ANDREW WYLIE

OF THAT ILK

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY S. R. CROCKETT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN WALLACE

VOLUME II

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCXCV

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SIR ANDREW WYLIE

SIR ANDREW WYLIE

CHAPTER XLIX

Presumptive Evidence.

WHILE our hero and the earl were thus conversing together, Sir Hubert Mowbray was announced. He came to pay his respects to his lordship, and to express his hope and wish that he would attend the trial of the gipsies.

"I will undoubtedly be present," said the earl; "but unless it is absolutely necessary for the ends of justice, I would decline being a witness."

Sir Hubert assured him that every due consideration would be paid to his lordship's feelings with respect to that point, and took his leave.

"I think," said the earl, "he does not appear to be pleased at the reservation I have expressed; but really it is so shocking a thing to be in any way concerned in offering up the sacrifices which the law so sternly requires that a man may well be excused for being reluctant to bear witness in the case of a capital offence."

"He's certainly no content with something," said Wylie thoughtfully; "and I am sorry to see that he would fain hae the gipsy hanged. But he's no the first man I hae heard of that has a yearning for blood, and would hunt his fellow-creatures down even to the death wi' an appetite in his mind as fell as the hunger of a rabiator.[1] But, my lord, the gipsy, for the ends of justice, must be protected; and I'll go and see him immediately anent the same."

Lord Sandyford was pleased with this alacrity. He had never given Andrew much credit for generosity; but the warmth of gratitude which he had manifested in his own case, with respect to the countess, and the interest which he now seemed to take in the fate of the friendless vagrants, convinced him that his merits did not entirely consist in his humour, nor in that intuitive perception of the manageable points of character, by which he had been so often surprised and diverted.

By the time our hero returned from the prison, the earl had ordered his carriage to be in readiness to convey them to Chastington Hall. But Wylie seemed in doubt and perplexity when he came back.

"The gipsy," said he, "is as innocent of the blood as the babe unborn: I could stake my right hand upon that; but for rifling the body, I hae little to say for him. I think, however, that it

[1] *Rabiator.* Literally, robber.

cannot be highway robbery, nor, indeed, anything beyond the lifting of a waif, provided it can be shown that he was willing, upon certification of proof, to make restoration to the heir. Now the heir, in this case, has as yet made no demand."

"As to that, whether it be law or not, I cannot presume to determine; but I must say it looks very like common-sense," replied the earl; "and with respect to the murder, if you can clear him of that, I should think the robbery will not place him in any very perilous jeopardy. It will, I fear, however, Wylie, be a difficult task to prove, to the satisfaction of any judge or jury, that two gipsies seen near a murdered man, and afterwards found with property in their possession known to have been about the person of the deceased, were not guilty of the murder."

"I own it, my lord; but when I hae the right end of the string I never despair. A deed has been done—somebody did it; but that somebody is no the poor ne'er-do-weel gipsies—or guilt has more guises than hypocrisy can put on."

"I certainly," observed the earl, "would rely, in any case, Wylie, where management was requisite, on your sagacity; but facts are stubborn things, and a gipsy is from his birth mulcted of more than half the rights of any other man."

"That's no to be disputed, my lord: a gipsy's character, a hachel's[1] slovenliness, and a waster's

[1] *Hachel.* A sloven.

want are three things as far beyond a' remedy as a blackamoor's face, a club-foot, or a short temper. But, as your lordship weel observes, facts are stubborn things: they are stepping-stones in the mire, and it is by them that I hope the do-na-gude may get over his present danger. At least, I'll try to lend him a helping hand. But no to trust altogether to the weakness of my own judgment, I'll hasten to London for the advice of some more experienced head."

"Then you will not go with me to Chastington?" said the earl.

"Your lordship mauna expect it in an instance of life and death like this; but, gin ye please, I'll take a nook in the carriage wi' you as far as the road lies in my way. It's, however, on a bargain that your lordship winna try to sift any more of my opinion in this business."

"Agreed!" cried the earl; "and I presume, as you were on your way when you halted here, you will have no objection to set off with me immediately."

"Hooly, hooly,[1] my lord!" exclaimed Wylie, resuming his wonted familiarity; "there maun be twa words about that. In the first place, I'm neither a swallow nor a camelion, to feed on the air of the lift;[2] and, in the second, a journey requires provender."

While the waiter was laying the cloth for some

[1] *Hooly.* Softly.
[2] *Air of the lift.* The atmosphere.

refreshment, Andrew went down to the stable-yard of the inn, and sauntering for a few minutes, apparently without an object, asked a post-boy which of his comrades had been with Lord Sandyford, and the lad having pointed them out, he went towards them, and said, "Hech, sirs! but it was a terrible job ye had o't wi' my lord. I wonder, for my part, that ye hae got so soon the better o't that ye can already whistle sae light-heartedly. How, in the name o' gude, did ye no notice the man? If ye hadna driven like deevils ouer him, maybe he might hae recovered."

The post-boys stared at an imputation which had never entered any other head, and one of them declared that the man must have been dead several hours. The other also as stoutly asserted that the body was stiff and cold; indeed, so much so, that it was like a log when he assisted to drag it from the road upon the grass. Wylie made no remark on this circumstance, but treasured it up in his own mind. It was certainly not at all probable that if the gipsies had killed and robbed the man at the same time, they would have returned to the body; and the declaration of the son that he had found it lying dead on the road, when disturbed in plundering it by the approach of Lord Sandyford's carriage, derived some confirmation from this testimony.

Our hero himself could bear witness for the gipsy, from the time he had joined the rest of the band at supper; and Doctor Saffron and his

servants would be satisfactory evidence of the hour of his arrival at the gate of the parsonage.

"About what time," said Andrew to the post-boys, "was the deceased last seen alive?"

Nobody in the stable-yard could give any satisfactory answer; but Sir Hubert Mowbray's groom happening to come in, on hearing the question, stated that he and his master had passed him on the road about ten o'clock, and not far from the spot where the murder had been committed.

Andrew recollected that ten was struck on the church-clock as he was standing at the parsonage-gate—and the gipsy had only then just left him, and could not be seven miles distant, (for so far off the murder had been committed), till at least an hour after. But he only observed to the groom that he and his master had not passed long before the murder was committed, as it appeared the deceased could not have walked far from the spot where they had seen him. This remark startled the fellow, and our hero saw his confusion, but, taking no notice of it, changed the current of his inquiries to some general reflections on the atrocity of the crime and the strong circumstances that bore against the gipsies. In the course, however, of a few minutes he said to the groom, "I wonder that you and your master were not afraid to be wandering through the forest at that time o' night, like two babes in the wood."

"Bless your heart," replied the groom, "we never fears no nothing there at all, besides being,

as you sees, on horseback. Why, soon after we passed that there poor soul who has been killed, master sent me off to order a po-shay here for him in the morning, to take him over to Sir Thomas Fowler's fox-chase, and rode home himself."

"Yes," said one of the post-boys, "we lost a good something by the job; for Sir Hubert in the morning could not have the chaise till so be it that these murderers were done for, and now he won't go at all till the 'sizes are over.'

"To be sure," said our hero, "it wouldna be a decent thing of him, as a magistrate, to be jaunting and gallanting about the country, when such a judgment has happened at his own door. I dare say, poor gentleman, it gives him great concern."

"You may say that," replied the groom, "for he has done nothing all day but fidget about, ordering and counter-ordering. And I don't wonder at it, for the dead man owed him a power of money for rent. And I suppose, now he's gone, that master won't touch a farding."

Some difference arose among the post-boys and menials as to the law of this opinion. In their discussion Andrew took no part, but walked away thoughtfully, as if he intended to return into the house, when suddenly he turned round, and cried to the groom, "Hey, Thomas Fowler, I want to speak to you!" beckoning to him at the same time.

"From what you say, Thomas, of the poor man

that was killed, I fear his family will be very ill off. Thomas—your name's Thomas Fowler, I think you said?"

"Lord bless you!" said the man; "my name's Robert Jenkins—it's master's friend they call Sir Thomas Fowler; and as for Mr Knarl, who has been killed, he had never no family at all, being, you sees, a single man."

"But I suppose he has died much and justly lamented by all who knew him," said Andrew.

"As for that," replied Robert Jenkins, "I cannot for a surety take it on me to say; but I knows he was a damned hard-mouthed chap, and never could give no civil answer at all."

"Then, after all, Robert Jenkins, I'm thinking there hae been greater losses at the Shirra Muir than his death," said our hero, and abruptly returned into the house, and, despatching his repast, entered the carriage with Lord Sandyford, and was hastily driven off.

CHAPTER L

Sagacity.

WYLIE, from his arrival in London, had continued to lodge with Mrs Callender till Mr Vellum took possession of Sandyford House, when the solicitor, apprehensive that the earl might change his mind, not choosing to dispose of his own residence, gave it in custody to Jacob, an elderly married man, who acted as his porter and special messenger. With him Andrew was allowed the use of a bed and parlour; and the address on the card given to the gipsy was, in consequence of this arrangement, from the house in Queen's Square.

It was late in the evening when, after parting from Lord Sandyford, he reached London; and on entering Queen's Square, he found a mob assembled round the house, and the gipsy woman, as he suspected, already there; and on advancing towards them, he found they had been ordered into custody by Jacob for besieging the door.

The gipsies soon recognised him, and clamorously and in tears claimed his promised protection. He had no difficulty in divining the motive of

their pertinacious visit, and interfering in their behalf with the officers, as he was well known in the neighbourhood, readily obtained their deliverance. He then requested the constables to advise the crowd to disperse, while he directed Jacob to receive the vagrants into the kitchen, and get them something to eat.

While the gipsies were descending into the area, their benefactor was admitted by the hall-door; and, on entering the parlour, he said to Jacob, "I dare say that auld gipsy wife is a daub baith at cawk and keel.[1] What think ye?"

"I don't doubt it, sir," replied Jacob, who was not altogether an infidel in gipsy prophecy.

"Ah!" cried Andrew, "I suppose ye hae been getting your fortune spae't."

Jacob firmly denied the fact. "Indeed," said he, "the gipsies were very sullen, and have been sleeping on the steps all the afternoon; and when we ordered them away, they said you would not have done so, and complained bitterly of having travelled a great way to see you, and showed us one of your cards all patched."

"Did they say nothing of the end's errand they had come upon?"

"No," replied Jacob; "but they were much cast down to hear that it was uncertain when you would be back; and so, as they would not go away from the door, I ordered them into custody."

[1] *Daub*, &c. Expert with chalk and ruddle, after the manner of fortune-tellers.

"That was very prudent in you, Jacob; and as I would like to ken what they want wi' me, just slip down and bring up the auld woman. And, hear ye, Jacob, tak tent that ye leave no spoons nor sma' things lying loose about; for the gipsies hae tarry fingers,[1] and ye would need an e'e in your neck to watch them."

As soon as the old woman was ushered into the parlour, our hero said to her, "Ye haena been blate nor late, honest woman, in paying me a visit. What's happened to you, and whar's your gudeman and your son?"

The gipsy faithfully reported the whole proceedings, with which our hero was already acquainted; and the unvarnished accuracy of her narration made him respect her veracity. Towards the conclusion of her story she became animated and agitated, especially when she described the scene which took place at the examination, asserting, with great vehemence, that Sir Hubert Mowbray himself was the murderer.

"Base scoot!" exclaimed Andrew, affecting more indignation than he felt; "what puts such a thought into your head?"

The old woman made no reply, but looked steadily in his face for some time, and then added, "What I say is true; and you believe me."

"Wheesht, wheesht, ye auld runt; you ought to be flung into a mill-dam, and left to sink as a

[1] *Tarry fingers.* Fingers to which things stick; light-fingered.

Christian or swim as a witch. But what reason hae ye for this notion?"

"Why was he so greedy," cried the accuser, "of everything against my son? The hope of safety flushed on his cheeks and glistened in his eyes whenever anything came up against him. Why did he tear your card? I saw deceit in his visage when he did it. I doubt if he has written down the true name; for I watched the motion of his fingers in the act, and they ran not in the way the letters on the card do. His hand was shaking at the time, albeit he is a man of a stout heart."

This suggestion with respect to the card made the blood run cold in our hero's veins; and, as he eyed the old woman with a wary and eager look, he said, "Ye're no canny, gudewife—ye're no canny. But gang awa' back to your ain countryside; and when the trial comes on, I'll be there."

The sibyl made no reply to this, but, with a token of respect, moved to leave the room. On reaching the door, however, as she took hold of the handle, she turned round and said solemnly, "I can see the light through the horn, and the bird in the shell."

"Cast nane o' your cantrips here, lucky, but do as I bid you," said our hero, seriously alarmed. In the same moment he rang the bell, she opened the door, and smiling with an expression that might be described as full of a mysterious and benignant superiority, again curtsied and withdrew.

Jacob, guessing the occasion of his summons, conducted the gipsy down to the kitchen in the first place, and then returned to his master.

"Jacob," said our hero to him as he entered the room, "I redd you tak tent o' that carlin, and use her and the bairns discreetly, for I trow she has mair insight than honest folks; and I warn you to cross her loof wi' siller.[1] There's five shillings to you, to help you to get well rid o' her out o' the house."

Jacob was not a little impressed with this speech, and was beginning to relate many well-authenticated stories of gipsy witchery when he was cut short by Wylie, who, already sufficiently eerie, said, "Ye need say nae mair about them; for their power and discernment is no to be disputed. They're capable to mak the like o' you, Jacob, believe that spade-shafts will bear plums; so look to yoursel', Jacob, or wha kens what may befall you?"

Jacob's countenance underwent several changes during this speech, and still more when Andrew continued, "And noo, Jacob, when I think o't, we maun gie something to the young woman and the bairns, that we may get a waff o' their good-will[2] likewise. Ye'll gie the mither this half-crown, and a shilling apiece to the wee anes; and if your wife can lay her hands on a claught[3] o' ony-

[1] *Redd . . . tak tent . . . discreetly . . . trow . . . loof.* Counsel . . . take care . . . civilly . . . believe . . palm.

[2] *Waff*, &c. Passing benison.

[3] *Claught.* Handful.

thing eatable for the family to tak wi' them, for God's sake tell her no to be scant or scrimpit; for Heaven only knows what will be the o'ercome o' this visitation."

By this time Jacob was standing pale and wan, and our hero saw that it was quite unnecessary either to put him more upon his guard, with respect to the wiles of the gipsies in the house, or impress him with the necessity of getting well quit of them. Indeed, when Jacob went downstairs, nothing was too good for the gipsies, who soon after departed highly satisfied, bestowing their kindest benedictions in a manner (as Jacob said) that could scarcely have been expected almost from a Christian.

CHAPTER LI

A Friendless Barrister.

WHEN the old woman had retired, our hero went immediately to Sandyford House to consult Mr Vellum, who expressed great surprise at seeing him so soon back. He was, however, too much a man of the world to make any inquiries; but when Andrew mentioned that he had fallen in with the earl on the road, and, in consequence of some things connected with that meeting, he had been induced to return to town, he was not altogether satisfied in his own mind, and thought his lordship showed something like a prejudicial partiality in confiding so much in a person so far below himself in the consideration of the world. Nor was this apprehensive feeling allayed when Andrew said, "Noo, Mr Vellum, I want your assistance in a great cause that I have taken in hand, for a person to whom, in a time of straits, I was indebted for no small civility. Lord Sandyford, as well as myself, is concerned in the occasion. It's no in the eye of the world a thing by common, nor, in truth, what ye would be fashed with; but I'm bound in gratitude and humanity,

Mr Vellum, to see the parties righted. Two decent men in their way, a father and a son, Mr Vellum, are accused of having committed a trespass; but there is some reason to jealouse the true trespasser is a person of great power and consideration, who, to save his own carcass, wouldna scruple to sacrifice my two frien's. What I therefore want, and nobody knows better whom to recommend than yoursel', is some sharp and fearless young lad that has his bread to bake at the Bar, that I may employ him at my own cost, Mr Vellum, to assist the twa poor men out o' their difficulties; for really the circumstances look hard against them. In truth, it's a knotty case, and will require patience of thought, as well as bravery o' mind, sic as nae first-rater can afford to give, and deal justly with other clients; and yet it's just a case that a first-rater is alone capable of handling to a proper issue. On that account, I want talents of the first quality, and leisure to allow them to be thoroughly applied."

Why our hero should have thrown such a haze of mysticism over the business must be left for the consideration of those who can penetrate into the depths of his peculiar character. It had the effect, however, of leading the solicitor to suspect that this said great cause was connected with the imputed infidelities of the countess, in which, from the previous declaration of the earl, he supposed his lordship was averse, at least for the present, to appear personally.

Accordingly, under this impression, and believing that in due time the management of the ultimate proceedings would devolve into his own hands, he mentioned several young men then coming forward at the Bar with the promise of ability. But Wylie objected to them all, as being more ambitious to make a figure themselves than to set forward the causes of their clients to the best advantage. At last he hit upon one that he thought would answer.

"Do the circumstances require any aid from eloquence?" said Vellum.

"No," replied our hero; "but we'll want a paper of great pith drawn up for the defence."

"Then," replied Vellum, "I recommend you to secure Blondell. He is a young man of very singular accomplishments, and, owing to an impediment in his speech, he can never become eminent as a pleader; but he is an impressive writer, and is, besides, possessed of a curiously constituted mind, and a strong natural power of observation."

"He has been made on purpose for my turn," replied our hero, "if he answers your description; so I beg ye'll gie me two or three lines to him, that I may confer with him mysel' in private; for there are some points in the business that canna very well be set forth in a brief. Over and above all, although my Lord Sandyford's a principal witness, his lordship would fain decline appearing; and ye ken we maun suit oursel's to his humour to the best of our ability."

Vellum immediately wrote a note to Blondell, introducing Wylie to him and requesting his particular attention to the object and purpose of his visit. With this note, our hero proceeded directly to Clement's Inn, where the obscure chambers of this neglected son of genius were situated.

Blondell was at home, and the moment that he had read the introductory note, Andrew said, in his abrupt manner, "Ye see, sir, that I have a notion to become acquaintit with you; and ye're a man, or I'm wrang informed, of ouer mickle discernment no to be sensible that I must hae some particular reason for taking such an extraordinary freedom, especially when I tell you that the business wherein I stand in need of your help is no ane that ony regular brief can be made up on. In a word, Mr Blondell, I want you to go into the country with me, in order to assist in the defence of two friendless gipsies who stand accused of murder. I believe them innocent, and I think I can guess who the true murderer is; but as I would do nothing on suspicion, I mean to confine oursel's to the defence of my clients. For this business ye can hae nae fee in the usual way; but I'll bear all your expenses, and make you a reasonable compensation for the loss o' time; and if we succeed, as I doubt not we shall, I hae some hope ye'll make such friends by the business as will put their shoulders to your wheels throughout the rest o' your life."

The plainness of this address produced the

desired effect. Blondell said he would accept the proposal at once.

"In truth, Mr Wylie," said he, with a feeling which added considerably to his natural difficulty in expressing himself, "I have not at this time much to do, and I am obliged, you see, to betake myself to other studies than those of my profession."

Our hero looked at his table, and saw on it several volumes, consisting of novels, travels, and poetry.

"These," said Blondell, "are my pot-boilers. I am obliged to do all manner of literary labour, under all possible varieties of name."

"It's weel for you, Mr Blondell, that you can do so; but ye maun give up meddling with sic clishmaclavers as novels and ballads, and lend your whole power and pith to me. I dinna, however, wish you to work cossnent wark,[1] that is, without meat or wage; so I beg ye'll come and tak' your dinner in a private secrecy wi' me, at Mr Vellum's house in Queen's Square; and by that time I'll be provided wi' a bit of Abraham Newlands' paper[2] to help to keep the banes green till we see what's to be done with the two ne'er-do-weels that I hae ta'en by the hand."

Blondell was much amused by the originality of our hero's manner, and readily accepted the invitation.

[1] Generally means work paid in money but not in victuals.

[2] Bank of England notes, so known because signed by Abraham Newlands, cashier from 1780–1807.

CHAPTER LII

Doubts.

JACOB," said our hero, when the old man admitted him on his return from the interview with Blondell, "there's a great man to dine wi' me the morn, so ye'll see and hae everything in the best order, and tell your wife to gie us a spice of her skill in cookery, and see that you can behave yoursel' on the occasion. For he's somewhat o' an odd way, and may come no just, as by rights he ought to do, in his own carriage, but in ane of the blackguard hackneys, or aiblins on his feet. They call him Mr Blondell; and when once he has come, mind, I'm no at home to ony living creature, no, not even to my Lord Sandyford an' he were to come to town, nor to ane lower than the king himself, whom you know we are all bound to serve and obey to within an inch of our lives. So I hope you will take heed to what I am telling you."

Jacob was not altogether without need of an exhortation of this kind; for Andrew had observed that he was a great respecter of persons, and anticipated that the simple air and plain

attire of Blondell were not calculated to gain much of his reverence.

At the hour appointed the barrister came, and was received with the utmost deference and consideration; but, as Wylie expected, he arrived on foot, under the protection of only an umbrella, although the weather was drizzling. Jacob's wife, on her part, was none deficient; and when dinner was over, the door of the dining-room was closed, and admission to all and every sort of visitors strictly prohibited.

Our hero then entered into a circumstantial relation of the whole case. He described, first, his own adventures with the gipsies; then, the circumstances under which the body was found; and, lastly, the examination as it had been reported by Lord Sandyford. In this he neither extenuated nor exaggerated, but related the details as accurately as he could recollect. He, however, kept carefully out of view his own reflections on the business, his discoveries in the stable-yard, and his interview with the gipsy woman, and her suspicions, saying, "Noo, Mr Blondell, what I have been telling you is the case, as it will come on before the court. What's your aff-hand opinion o't; for all that I hae said will be proven by evidence?"

"Whether the gipsies are guilty or not guilty," replied Blondell, "they will be condemned. No jury can resist facts so strong, nor presumptions so striking. But you said that in your mind

you believed the gipsies innocent, and that you thought you knew who the real murderer is. Let me know upon what this opinion is founded."

Wylie looked earnestly at Blondell, and after a pause of about a minute, said, "There are some things that shoot up in our fancies, that we would need to guard even frae the ear of friendship; for, unless they prove true, the disclosure will make fools of us, and gin they are true, we dare scarcely own them, they so far surpass the guesses of human wisdom." He then described the manner of Sir Hubert Mowbray during the interview with the earl. "He was a man," said he, "fey[1] wi' something on his mind. There was a sort of inward fury about his thoughts, his eyes were gleg and suspicious, and full of fear, and his words were quick, and of an uneven and unnatural sound."

"Your observations are shrewd and impressive, but there is nothing in them that can be available on the trial. They might help to swell the interest of a winter's tale, but cannot be urged in court, nor are they susceptible of being brought out in evidence," said Blondell.

Our hero than resumed, and related with minute accuracy what afterwards passed in the stable-yard. The moment that he adverted to the despatching of Jenkins the groom for a post-chaise, Blondell clapped his hands eagerly, and exclaimed, "The gipsies may be saved; but we

[1] *Fey.* Borne down. See *Annals of the Parish*, vol. i. p. 149.

must still have something stronger against Sir Hubert before we can venture to reckon on their acquittal. We must throw suspicion upon him."

Wylie then mentioned his own conversation with the gipsy woman, and her suspicion that the magistrate had not written down the address that was on the card.

"There will be no other witnesses summoned," said Blondell, "but those who were examined at the coroner's inquest; and as Jenkins the groom was not there, I should not be surprised if he were sent out of the way."

At this juncture the bell of the street-door was impatiently rung, and soon after the gipsy boy was heard clamorous in the hall. Wylie expressed his astonishment at the circumstance, and going to the room-door desired the boy to come in and tell him what had happened.

The poor creature was jaded and heated, and so entirely covered with mud that he looked more like a statue of clay than a human being. Jacob was ordered to retire; and the boy then related that, as he was returning with his mother and grandmother to the town where his father and grandfather were imprisoned, they had passed a stage-coach, on the top of which was Jenkins the magistrate's groom, and that his grandmother ordered him to dog him at all hazards.

"I thereupon," said the boy, "ran in and below the coach, and, hugging the perch, came with it

to London, and the man is now at the inn where it put up."

"Ye're a clever callant, and it's a pity ye're a gipsy," said our hero; "but go down to the kitchen and get something to eat, and there's half-a-crown to help you to a lodging. Look sharp, however, after Jenkins, and dinna let him think he's watched. The hand of Heaven," said our hero piously, when the gipsy had left the room in charge of Jacob, who was summoned to conduct him downstairs, "is visibly stretched forth in this bloody work. Jenkins must be subpœnaed on our side;"—which was done the following morning, not a little to his surprise and the consternation of his master.

Blondell having acquired, in conversation with our hero at different times, the sort of information which we have described, accompanied him, a few days prior to the assizes, to the town where the gipsies were imprisoned. They found the doom of the poor outcast creatures considered as sealed. Numberless stories of their atrocities reconciled the humanity of the inhabitants to the ignominious destiny that awaited them.

It was of consequence to the success of the defence that the character of Sir Hubert Mowbray, and of the state of intercourse which had existed between him and the deceased, should be thoroughly ascertained. With respect to the former there was no difficulty: the character of Sir Hubert stood high among his neighbours; he

inherited from his father an ample patrimony, which he had materially improved. The whole country, indeed, applauded his general conduct; but there were a few invidious persons who qualified their praises with some insinuations against his implacable spirit, alleging that he was even as persevering in his resentments as he was zealous in his friendships, and that, if he had not been so prosperous, he might have proved a bitter and malicious character. "He is a man," said Blondell one evening to Andrew, as they were comparing notes together in the inn where they had taken up their abode, "whose success seems to deter people from speaking out what they think of him."

The inquiries respecting his intercourse with the murdered man were not, however, so easily answered. Their condition in life had been so very different, and the issue of their respective fortunes also had been so dissimilar, that nothing of the nature of an intimacy existed between them. In the outset of life the deceased had been in a better sphere, and when a young man was admitted into the best societies in the country; but falling into irregular habits, he had gradually lost caste. Towards him, it was said, Sir Hubert had acted very generously; never particularly pressing him for the payment of his rent, which was generally in arrears.

Blondell, on receiving this account, began to waver in his suspicions. He still thought that

the gipsies were not guilty of the murder; but he could not bring himself to believe that a gentleman of Sir Hubert Mowbray's character, so friendly to the deceased as he was represented to have been, was likely to be hastily betrayed into the commission of so foul a deed; for it seemed to him that, if he had committed the murder, it must have been on premeditation, from the circumstance of sending his groom to order the post-chaise, after he had confessedly passed Mr Knarl in the forest.

"Had the groom," said Blondell, "been previously despatched, it might (as it is reported that Knarl was a hard-mouthed fellow) have been reasonable to suppose that they had quarrelled perhaps about his arrears, and that in the quarrel a hasty and fatal blow was inflicted. But according to the facts, and in unison with our information, it does not appear to me that Sir Hubert could have had any motive for the perpetration of the crime. I am disposed, therefore, to think that it must have been committed by another—some unknown individual."

Andrew could not reply to these observations; but he still adhered to his own opinion that the baronet, and he alone, was guilty. At the same time, he was convinced that unless the blood could be very clearly brought home to some other than the unfortunate gipsies, the probability was (from the prejudices entertained against them) that they would be inevitably cast. He

therefore remained some time silent and thoughtful after Blondell had paused; and when the other said to him, "What is your opinion now?" he replied, "It's no easy to say what I think; but although it's an old story since Sir Hubert and the deceased were on any footing of equality, there might hae been matter for a grudge between them then, the which, from the constancy of the baronet's nature, may have been treasured up for a day of reckoning. I have heard of Highlander gentlemen nursing revenge from generation to generation, and visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children; and I jealouse that what's done in the north may likewise be done in the south, especially when I hear of folk possessed wi' a Highland dureness of temper. I wouldna marvel, Mr Blondell, that some taunt at the races in their youth, or the whisking away of a partner at a ball, had become motive enough, in the breast of a man with Sir Hubert's pride and perseverance, to grow to the foul head of this murder."

Blondell was struck with the remark, and after remaining some time reflecting with himself, said, "What you observe is certainly not improbable; and perhaps, instead of troubling ourselves any more about the intercourse of latter years, we should try to ascertain what sort of intimacy existed between them in their youth."

But the assizes were to commence in two days, and there seemed to be no means before the trial

left to obtain access to the sources of this information. Our hero, however, suggested an expedient that surprised Blondell even more than the ingenuity he had hitherto shown. It was no less than to employ the old gipsy woman in the inquiry.

CHAPTER LIII

Consultations.

FOR some days prior to the arrival of our hero and Blondell, the poor gipsy women and the children had been seen trotting about the skirts of the town. At first they pitched their tent under the hedge on the road leading to the mansion of Sir Hubert Mowbray; but he ordered his servants to drive them away. Being thus forced to change the place of their encampment, they removed to a lane behind the inn, where the servants about the stables, in compassion for their misfortune, sometimes condoled with them on the fate of their relations. As often, however, as this was done, the children began to weep bitterly, and their mother sat dejected and silent; while the old woman, dilating as with the energy of the inspired Pythia, astonished her auditors with her fierce and oracular predictions. In the midst of one of these rapturous paroxysms Sir Hubert sent them some money, and requested them to retire from the neighbourhood until the trial was over. In an instant, as if actuated by one spirit, the whole group started

up, and with loud and vehement imprecations against the injustice of man, demanded the interposition of Heaven. Nothing, however, escaped them to betray in the slightest degree their suspicion of Sir Hubert, except a rash and indignant repulse, by the boy, of the servant's hand who offered them the money. The old woman, observing the action, became at once calm, and making a sign to the others, silenced them also, while she took the money, saying significantly, "It is sent by Providence to enable us to get help to prove who is indeed the true murderer."

The whole of this scene produced a profound sensation among the bystanders, and some of them began to doubt if the gipsies were guilty, while all regarded the forlorn family with sentiments of compassion and charity. A small collection in consequence was raised for them on the spot; and the benevolent feeling in which it originated spreading through the town, a considerable sum was soon raised.

It being known among the servants of the inn that Blondell was a barrister, soon after his arrival the old woman had come with the money in her hand to solicit his assistance. Blondell at first refused the money; but our hero signified to him that he ought, in the meantime, to accept it.

"It is necessary," said he, "that we should not appear overly voluntary in this affair, till we get a better grip o' the case, and ye must just submit to be thought lightly of for a season."

The effect of taking the money was what Andrew anticipated; and the meanness of Blondell was everywhere loudly condemned. Some of his brethren of the long robe, on reaching the town that evening, when they heard of the transaction, made a great stir about the respectability of the profession, and treated Blondell with unequivocal marks of their contempt, all of which he endured with invulnerable fortitude. Thus, not only were the prisoners already sentenced in public opinion, but their counsel contemned as obscure and incapable, and, in both principles and practice, a disgrace to the Bar. It required no little resolution on his part to bear this with patience; and more than once he expressed to Wylie his apprehensions that the prejudice against them would be fatal to their clients. Andrew, however, was none dismayed. He had embarked in the business, and with that undeviating perseverance which no casualty seemed to affect, he resolutely went forward.

In pursuance of the plan which our hero had suggested, as we noticed at the conclusion of the last chapter, the old gipsy was sent for, and when she entered the room he said, "Noo, lucky, I have a hankering to get a fortune told, and as ye have no doubt some slight with cawk and keel,[1] I would fain hae the help o' your hand in that business."

The old woman looked at him with a keen and

[1] See page 10.

inquisitive eye, and then turning round to Blondell, and raising her left hand over her eyes, as if the sun dazzled them, steadily perused every trait and feature of his countenance also. "Neither of you, I see," said she calmly, "would at this time trifle with the grief of a miserable old woman. What's your pleasure? Whose fortune would you have me read?"

"Come, come, lucky," cried our hero, "none of your antic cantrips with me. I have a notion that ye can spae[1] best when ye know something about the history of your customers, and that it's easier to read thirty years of a dead man's life than three days of what's to happen to the living. Now the fortune that we want told is the murdered man's; and ye maun try in your canny way to get us some account of his green years, before the blight fell on him. Find out whether he has suffered the cross of faithless love or treacherous friendship; what blink of an evil eye marred his flourishings, or whether he has had occasion to dread or feel the enmity of any secret adversary."

Blondell seemed to think that perhaps the old woman would not understand this sort of language, and added, "We wish, in fact, good woman, to know if, in early life, there was ever any quarrel——"

Andrew checked him abruptly, saying, "Toot, toot, man, we'll no get at the truth if ye tell what ye want. This carlin here can cleck lies enew to

[1] *Spae.* Divine.

satisfy you, if lies would serve. Gudewife, ye ken very weel what we want. Gang and learn a' ye can, and then come back as soon as possible."

The old woman, for about half a minute, stood erect and silent, as if she was inwardly pondering with herself; and then, as it were, coming out of her trance, she looked cheerfully at Andrew, and immediately left the room.

When she had retired, Blondell said it would be necessary to prepare something for the prisoners to read in their defence, whatever might be the course that circumstances might afterwards require him to pursue; and for this purpose he went to his own room that he might not be disturbed, Lord Sandyford, who had written to our hero on hearing he had arrived, being then hourly expected. It occurred to Andrew, however, that as the gipsies could not read, as Blondell stuttered, as judges, however clear in their delivery, are seldom good readers, and as he himself was a very bad one, it would be of great consequence to obtain somebody to read the defence, upon the proper effect of which much might depend, both with the court and the jury.

In deliberating with himself on this point, the bold idea once or twice presented itself that if Lord Sandyford could be induced to undertake the important task, the effect of his lordship's rank, with the pathos and grace of his elocution, would be in the highest degree effective; and

by the time the earl arrived, he had resolved to speak to him on the subject.

Accordingly, next day, on his lordship's arrival, after their first salutations were over, he said, "Although, my lord, I have no doubt of the poor gipsies' innocence of the murder, yet there are great difficulties in the way of an effectual defence. In the first place, they can neither write nor read; secondly, Mr Blondell, whom I have brought with me to stand up for them, is a dreadful stammerer; and, thirdly, your lordship knows that the judge is such a desperate drone that, were he to read the defence, the likelihood is that he would croon the jury asleep, instead of moving either their hearts or understandings to yield towards the prisoners. This fashes me, and I really am greatly at a loss."

"I should have thought," said the earl, "that you would have provided a fitter advocate than the one you seem to have chosen."

"I had my reasons," replied Andrew, "for what I have done; and could I but get anybody with a rational portion of common-sense to read the paper that Mr Blondell is now preparing, I would not despair of an acquittal."

Lord Sandyford appeared a little struck with the first part of this remark, and said, "I certainly ought not to question that you have acted in this matter with your characteristic sagacity; but I am surprised that you attach so much importance to anything that can be said in a paper. The

court and jury will be governed entirely by the facts that come out in evidence."

Andrew then explained to him that, for reasons within his own breast, he did not wish that anything should arise to lessen the prejudice against the prisoners till the whole case for the Crown was closed; and he informed his lordship of the light in which Blondell and himself, he had reason to believe, were considered both by the Bench and the Bar.

The earl was perplexed, and said, "I am thoroughly persuaded that the method you have chosen is equally prudent and wise, although I do not very distinctly perceive in what manner it is to be of use to the poor prisoners."

"Of the effect," replied Wylie, "I have no doubt; but it's a terrible thing that there's no a man wi' humanity enough able to read the paper as it should be read. The judge will mumble it; and were I to ask ony o' the barristers, the chance is that they would turn with a snort from both it and me."

"I cannot think," rejoined the earl, "that there is any such mighty difficulty in the way. Were it not contrary to the rules and forms of the court, I should have no objection to read it myself."

"That's a very charitable and kind proposition on your lordship's part; and I am sure there is no obstacle of law against it. Ye'll be sitting, I'se warrant, on the bench; and when the time

comes I can hand up the paper to your lordship, as it were for the judge, and your lordship can then, just in an easy way, ask leave to read the paper: for Mr Blondell writes a sma' narrow crabbit hand, and the judge is an old man that to a certainty never could well make it out."

The earl smiled, and said, "This is too much. From the first, Wylie, you have been contriving to get me to undertake this business. I see through it all; and I give you credit for the way in which you made the proposal come from myself. However, I will so far humour you in this task of mercy as to play into your hands. But as Blondell writes such 'a sma' narrow crabbit hand,' it is highly necessary that I should peruse his paper before attempting to read it from the bench."

During the remainder of the evening nothing particularly passed with his lordship, who, being somewhat fatigued by his journey from Chastington Hall, retired early; while Blondell and our hero sat up, in expectation of hearing something of the gipsy.

CHAPTER LIV

Inferences.

ABOUT midnight the old woman made her appearance with a haggard expression of exultation and triumph in her eyes. The moment that the waiter who showed her into the room had retired, and the door was closed behind him, she rushed eagerly towards our hero, and, raising her left hand, shook it mysteriously; at the same time elevating also the forefinger of her right, she hurriedly began to speak to the following effect:—

"Fate and death are on the road: I hear them coming; but I see an angel of glory standing beside you that will daunt them from passing to harm me or mine. The dead man and his murderer were plants of the same spring-time; and when their heads were green, the blasted and the fallen was the gayest and the proudest. They were boon companions; a lily grew in the valley, and they both stretched out their hands; the dead man won the flower, but from that day his fortune began to fade; the cry of a rifled maiden went up to heaven and brought down the

mildew; and the spite of a thwarted lover, like the invisible fire that withers the summer bough, secretly worked its decay."

"Hooly, hooly, lucky!" cried Andrew, while Blondell sat admiring the sibylline energy of the hag. "Come down out of the clouds, and set by your broomstick; for though we can ettle a guess at the substance of your raving, we maun hae something more to the purpose. The lily ye're making a' this ranting about was just some young lass, and the valley it grew in was, I trow, nothing else than some cottar's shed; so speak to the point, lucky, and fash us nae mair with your hieroglyphicals."

"I can but speak," cried the gipsy earnestly, "as ye have heard. There is no malice like that of a disappointed lover, nor a deadlier foe than an angered friend. The grass has long been green over Alice Cresswell's bosom, but the hate of her baffled lover could only be quenched in blood. Thrice seven times has the leaf fallen since she was laid in the earth, and every time the fortunes of her betrayer were left barer."

"Weel, but tell us whar ye heard a' this ravelled clishmaclavers," exclaimed Andrew peevishly.

The old woman, however, had no other way of expressing herself except in her gipsy jargon, and that was still more unintelligible. Blondell, however, interposed, and, by dint of a long and patient questioning, ascertained that when Knarl and Sir Hubert were young men, they had both

attempted to seduce Alice Cresswell, a gamekeeper's daughter, and that Knarl became the favoured lover. In consequence of this, from being intimate friends, they became for some time deadly enemies; and Sir Hubert, being a person of greater opulence than his rival, contrived to thwart him in all his undertakings, until he had brought him to the verge of ruin. Knarl was perfectly sensible of his malign influence, although it was so managed that he could not openly charge him with any fraud or design, and took, on all occasions, every opportunity of fastening a quarrel on his enemy, but without success. At last, by this intemperance having worked his own exclusion from the society of gentlemen, he fell into dissipated habits, which completed his degradation.

In this stage of his misfortunes, Sir Hubert then stepped forward, and, seemingly with great magnanimity, entreated him to forget the grudge that had so long subsisted between them, and generously offered to befriend him. Knarl knew his rival too well to trust much to the sincerity of his professions; but the pressure of distress, and that laxity of the sense of honour which adversity ever causes, overcame his scruples, and he accepted of a farm, on liberal terms, from his enemy. The conduct of the baronet had all the outward characteristics of generosity, and the affair redounded much to his credit; but still Knarl suspected that something lurked at the bottom of

the cup which had been so unexpectedly and so warmly proffered, for occasionally, when flushed with wine, he would give vent to his suspicions. And on the day prior to the murder something of this kind had taken place, with a threat of exposure.

Such was the substance of the information which the old gipsy had obtained. It seemed to present nothing available to the defence of the prisoners; and when the poor woman retired Blondell shook his head, and spoke as if he considered their case hopeless. Not so our hero: he made no remark, but sat thoughtfully for some time; he then began to move about, and, finally, to pace the room in perplexity, halting every now and then, as if he intended to speak, but as often checking himself.

Blondell, who by this time had acquired a profound respect for his sagacity, remained silent, watching his motions with interest and curiosity. At last Andrew resumed his seat, and said, "I think, Mr Blondell, this gathering of odds and ends by that auld wife will hae a powerful effect. My lord, ye ken, has promised to read the defence. Now ye maun put into it a hypothetical story, wherein ye will relate, in a circumstantial manner, something like this tale of Knarl; and ye'll suppose a man who has been so spited by misfortune meeting in a state of intoxication with some one that he had thought wronged him, and that a quarrel ensued; and when ye have

set all this out to advantage with your best cunning, ye'll then take another turn, and describe the workings of the venom of resentment in the breast of his adversary; and with that art which ye know how to employ ye'll represent that adversary yearning for revenge, and watching with great vigilance for an opportunity to satisfy his hatred; winding up with some supposed meeting by accident, under cloud of night, in a lonely forest, nobody near, nor eye to see, but only the stars of heaven. Do this, and we'll see what effect it has on Sir Hubert, who will no doubt be present at the trial; and by that we'll shape the line of our defence, and be regulated in the bringing forward of our evidence."

Blondell was not altogether satisfied with this irrelevant mode of proceeding; but Wylie urged him so strongly that before going to bed he altered the paper which he had previously prepared for the defence, and it was ready for Lord Sandyford to peruse in the morning.

The trial excited a great deal of interest, and a vast multitude were early assembled round the court-house. Among them the unhappy gipsy family stood near the entrance to the hall; and the crowd opened involuntarily as judges and the high sheriff, with their officers and attendants, passed in state. The moment that the old woman saw them she dropped on her knees; and the rest of the family, following her example, knelt in a row by her side, and

loudly clamoured to the heavens to send down justice.

The spectators were profoundly impressed by this spectacle, and made way with silence and solemnity for the unfortunate gipsies to retire from the spot. A few children who were in the crowd followed them, and stood round them in sympathetic compassion as they mournfully seated themselves on the steps of a door, awaiting the fate of their relations, who were in the meantime placed at the bar.

CHAPTER LV

The Trial.

AT the trial the Earl of Sandyford and Sir Hubert Mowbray were seated on the bench, and his lordship sat on the right of the judge who presided. When the indictment was read, the prisoners pleaded "Not Guilty." The son was proceeding with great vehemence to assert their innocence of the murder, while he again acknowledged that they had plundered the body; but upon a signal from our hero, he suddenly desisted and stood silent.

After a short statement of the case from the counsel for the Crown, the examination of the evidence commenced. The post-boys were asked the same questions which they had formerly answered before the coroner. Lord Sandyford's groom was also interrogated to the same facts; and it was clearly established that the younger prisoner was one of the two persons who had been scared from the body. Several other witnesses proved that they had found the watch and the trinkets of the deceased in the possession, and on the person, of the old man.

The case for the prosecution being thus closed, the spectators were convinced that the guilt was fully established, and the court also wore an aspect portentous to the unfortunate prisoners. Sir Hubert Mowbray, who had evinced throughout the examination a troubled and eager solicitude, threw himself back in his seat, as if tired with some inordinate labour, and seemed relieved from the most intense anxiety.

After a short pause, the judge inquired what the prisoners had to urge in their defence; and Blondell replied for them that they had prepared a short statement, which they hoped the judge would read to the jury. The paper was accordingly passed by him to Andrew, who had seated himself, as if by accident, under Lord Sandyford, and he gave it up to his lordship. The earl was a little agitated when he received it, but said to the judge, in giving it to him, that, as it seemed to be closely and cramply written, he would, with his permission, read it to the court.

The judge thanked his lordship for his politeness, and said aloud that "although the evidence adduced was really irresistible, yet the prisoners, in some respects, might be considered fortunate in the accident of having their defence put into the hands of his noble friend, the Earl of Sandyford, by whom it would be read with an effect that could not have been anticipated, and listened to by all present with a degree of respectful attention, which, after what was

proved in evidence, could scarcely have been expected."

At the conclusion of this address the earl rose. His elegant figure and prepossessing countenance were of themselves calculated to beget the most favourable disposition in his auditors, and this feeling was excited into a sentiment of reverence by the solemnity of the occasion and the charity of the office he had undertaken. Unaccustomed, however, to take a leading part in so mixed and numerous an assembly, there was a slight degree of diffidence in his manner: perhaps it might be owing to the consciousness of being a party to the benevolent artifice by which the paper had been placed in his hands. It, however, had the effect of engaging the affection, if we may use the term, of the spectators in his favour, adding, as it were, a touch of something that drew its essence from compassion to the conciliatory influence of his personal appearance.

The paper began with a simple description of the outcast condition of the prisoners, stating that had they consulted their own feelings they would have offered no defence, but allowed themselves to have been quietly conducted to the scaffold,—not because they had committed any crime which merited a doom so dreadful, but because they knew that neither the court nor the jury could otherwise than believe them guilty.

"The evidence," said the defence (and the reader became pathetic), "is so strong that we

are unable to resist it: we were scared from the body of the murdered man; his property was found in our possession. What avails assertions of innocence against facts so stubborn? But we are innocent, and, in the face of evidence that would convict the irreproachable judge himself before whom we are now arraigned, we declare ourselves free from the stain of this crime. Which, however, among you has any respect for the declaration of two miserable vagrants, bred up to dishonesty, practised in deceit, the natural termination of whose life, by almost all present, is considered as that which seems inevitably to await this poor despised old man, and the heir and partner of all his ignominy? My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury, the law of this land presumes that every culprit placed at the bar is innocent till he has been proved guilty. But are we so treated? On the contrary, my Lord and Gentlemen, lay your hands upon your own hearts, and say to Heaven, if you can, that you have not come to this trial with a general persuasion of our guilt, and in the investigation have not unconsciously construed the evidence against the friendless outcasts rather than sought to find in it any extenuating circumstance. But why need we dwell on this? why contend against a fatality that cannot be resisted? Habit, education, yea, the very letter of your law, the law by which you profess to give us justice, has taken from the vagrant gipsy all the common privileges of the

subject, and pronounces him a criminal before he is even accused of any crime. Had we not stood in this original degradation before you; had we possessed, like the felons that are usually brought to this bar, the basis of any claim to be considered as innocent, then we should have entered courageously on our defence, and, though we might not have succeeded against such evidence to demonstrate our perfect innocence, we should have made you, Gentlemen of the Jury, hesitate in your verdict, and even yourself, my Lord, tremble, when obliged to pronounce the fatal sentence. In that case, we should have shown that all against us is but presumptive circumstances. We should have demanded of the counsel for the Crown to prove that the body was not stiff and cold when the servants of Lord Sandyford removed it from the road; for, my Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury, we are prepared to prove that fact, and we would ask you—not you, but all; yea, the whole world—whether it is likely that two persons, who had hours before committed a murder on the highway, and under the cloud of night, would have exposed themselves to the hazard of detection, by going abroad in the morning to plunder their victim? The thing is incredible, and yet you must believe it, if you believe us guilty; for we shall show, by the witnesses for the prosecution, that they did find the body stiff and cold, at the very time when they detected us in the act of rifling it.

"My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury, you are to bear in mind that, could we have believed ourselves not previously considered by you as guilty, we would have shown that the deceased was seen alive on the preceding night, not far from the spot where his body was found. Is it not probable that the murder was committed soon after that time? And if we can prove that we were then at a considerable distance, we would ask you to say whether the persons who saw the murdered man at that hour on that spot are not more likely to have done the deed themselves than the unfortunate men whom the presumptive evidence (for it is only presumptive) which you have heard has prepared you to condemn? But you will think that the persons alluded to are freed from the risks of such a charge by the integrity and virtue of their character. Yes, my Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury, they are freed: no visible motive can be assigned to make it feasible that they were likely to commit such a crime; while the hereditary infamy and poverty of the gipsies constitute warranty enough to punish them for any offence. But is infamy the child or the parent of vice? And is poverty always the mother of crimes? The shame that attaches to the outcast wanderer is often but the extended visitation of ancestral sin; and in the unknown abysses of your own bosoms have you never felt the dark gropings of hatred and revenge? Set the infamy that gipsies

inherit from their parents aside—if your prejudices can be moved to do such an act of justice—and restore us to that equality which men placed in the perils of the law are justly entitled to claim and to expect, and much of that persuasion with which you have believed us guilty will at once pass away from your minds. Then think how many other incitements, as well as poverty, urge unhappy men to the commission of crimes, and you will not believe that poverty could alone be the instigator of this mysterious murder. Picture, for example, to yourselves two young men in the animation of youthful rivalry, their fortunes green and flourishing, and both in pursuit of the same mistress, with all that ardour which the energy of youth inspires. One of them is successful. Reflect on the mortification of the other—the grudge and the resentment which take root in his bosom. Follow them in the progress of life. See the successful lover, flushed perhaps with his guilty victory, rushing deeper and deeper into pleasure, and finally sinking into ruin; while his adversary, perhaps disgusted by the failure of his love adventure, settles into a prudent, a calculating, and a worldly character. Carry your view further, and in the wreck of his rival's fortune, see him stepping forward with a malicious generosity, which humbles while it aids, and, taking his enemy by the hand, amazing the world by his disinterested kindness. Then look into the mortified breast of the humiliated bank-

rupt, and contemplate the bitter feelings that a career of licentiousness has engendered, and which are darkly stirring and fomenting there. Is it to be supposed that between two such persons any other sentiment can exist than the most implacable hatred, though the habitual prudence of the one, and some remaining regard to the estimation of the world in the other, may still impose restraints which keep their respective animosities at bay? But suppose that by some accident, in the course of years, they are brought together, immediately after some recent provocation on both sides, and in such a place, for example, and at such a time of night, as when this murder was committed. Suppose, also, that the malignant benefactor is attended by his servant, and the bankrupt is on foot. If, next morning, the bankrupt is found murdered near the spot where they met, and if it can be proved that his inveterate enemy, soon after they had passed each other, sent away the servant on a needless pretext, would not every man think, whatever was the character of the gentleman——? Look to Sir Hubert Mowbray."

Lord Sandyford himself was startled at this abrupt apostrophe, which had been added after he had perused the defence before coming into court; and the alarmed emphasis with which he uttered it produced an awful effect.

CHAPTER LVI

The Tables Turned.

THE words, "Look to Sir Hubert Mowbray," were written at the bottom of a page, and on turning over the leaf nothing was added. The judge inquired what it meant; and Blondell immediately said he did not understand it, that the words must have been inserted by some mistake unknown to him. They were, in fact, supplied by our hero secretly, for he anticipated this effect; he had also abstracted the remainder of the defence.

"Mr Blondell," said the judge, "unless you think fit, it is unnecessary to proceed further in this sort of defence; I would advise you to call what witnesses you intend to bring forward."

The clear-sighted counsellor instantly acquiesced in this suggestion; and the earl sat down, pondering on the singularity of the incident, while every eye in the court was turned towards Sir Hubert Mowbray.

When order was restored (for the agitation which the abrupt apostrophe had produced lasted some time), our hero was placed in the witness-

box, where he related with singular brevity and clearness the whole of his adventure with the gipsies; but he was designedly not asked by Blondell respecting the card. Lord Sandyford sat in admiration of his self-command, and the quiet and unobtrusive distinctness of his answers, but was troubled at the omission of so important a fact. Doctor Saffron was then called, and proved the hour at which Wylie had applied for admission. The post-boys and Lord Sandyford's groom were successively again placed in the box, and clearly established what was asserted in the paper,—that the body was stiff and cold.

The judge was so amazed at the turn which the examination was taking that his hand shook as he took down the evidence. Suspicion darted from every eye on Sir Hubert; and several times it was observed that his lips became white, and a yellow suffusion overspread his countenance. But still he kept his place.

In this stage of the proceedings Blondell paused, and requested that the minutes of the examination before Sir Hubert, and of the coroner's inquest, should be read. It was done accordingly; but in Sir Hubert's notes, instead of our hero's name and address—the suspicion of the old gipsy woman was confirmed—another name and address had been substituted.

"Where is the card?" said Blondell.

"It has been somehow lost or mislaid," replied Sir Hubert with a faltering voice.

The judge animadverted on the carelessness of permitting such an accident to happen.

"It is of no consequence," said Blondell; and in a moment after he added, "But I find, my lord, that the card has not been lost. I crave, however, your lordship's attention, and that of the gentlemen of the jury, to the singular fact that it does not contain the name and address which has been read from the record of the minutes."

The patched card was then handed up to the judge, who, in passing it to Sir Hubert, looked him sternly in the face. The baronet, however, still mastered his agitation sufficiently to deny that it was the card.

The prisoners, on hearing his denial, uttered a groan of rage, and an appalling murmur ran through the whole court. Blondell, however, with inflexible serenity, went on with his business, and merely said, "I am sorry to trouble the court. I should have questioned the witness Wylie as to this point; but, my lord, the omission was intentional."

"I can believe that, Mr Blondell," replied the judge emphatically. "Let Wylie be again called."

He was accordingly placed in the box, and not only swore to the fact of having given the card, but also to that of the visit which he had received from the gipsy woman; and his evidence was confirmed as to the visit by the constable to whom Jacob had given her in charge, and who could not

divine, till that moment, for what reason he had been summoned as a witness.

A sound of dread and wonder murmured in the court, and was succeeded by the most profound silence, when Jenkins, Sir Hubert's groom, was called. His master, the moment he mounted the box, hastily retired; and it was indeed time, for his answers to a few simple questions, calculated to elicit the circumstances which he had stated to our hero in the stable-yard of the inn, convinced every person present that the suspicion attached much more strongly to Sir Hubert than even to the gipsies, although, in reality, no direct circumstance was clearly brought home. But so susceptible had every mind been rendered by the curious train of reflection which the written defence had been designedly drawn to produce that everything in the groom's evidence told with the force of a fact.

At this crisis an agitated howl of horror suddenly rose from the crowd assembled around the court-house. The judge started from his seat; and the jury, as if actuated by some sublime impulse, proclaimed the gipsies innocent. In the same instant a hundred voices exclaimed that Sir Hubert Mowbray, in a fit of distraction, had thrown himself from a window, and was killed on the spot.

The court immediately adjourned; but before the gipsies retired from the bar, Blondell took an opportunity of giving them, in the presence of his brethren, the money which the old woman had

brought to him, in her simplicity, as a fee. The foundation of his fortune was indeed laid, for the judge spoke of his address and talents in terms of the highest admiration; the consequence of which was that he was retained in almost every important cause, and, although the impediment in his speech prevented him from ever becoming a popular pleader, he acquired great opulence as a chamber counsellor, and through life spoke of our hero as the original architect of his fortune.

On none, however, did the singular result of this important trial leave so deep an impression as on the Earl of Sandyford. His lordship saw the pervading sagacity of his favourite in the whole skilful management of the defence; and when they met in the inn, after returning from the court, instead of treating him with that wonted familiarity which proceeded from a sense of his own superiority, he addressed him with so much respect that the change in his manner was assurance to Wylie of the ascendancy which he might now assume over even this accomplished and highly endowed nobleman. Still, however, his original and indestructible simplicity, like the purity of the invulnerable diamond, underwent no alteration. He continued the same odd and whimsical being; and even while the earl was seriously applauding the generosity and effect with which he had exerted himself in behalf of the gipsies, he began to fidget about the room, and to spout out his peevish surprise that they

had not the manners to thank him. "No," said he, "that I care a pea-strae for the wind of their mouth; but I would just hae liket to have had a canny crack with the auld wife anent their slights and cantrips, for when a' trades fail, my lord, I think I'll take to fortune-telling."

"And I know not an oracle that I would sooner consult," said the earl, in a gayer tone than he had been hitherto using.

"Say ye sae, my lord? Then lend me your loof, and ye shall be my first customer."

In the freedom of the moment, the earl laughingly held out his hand, which Andrew seized with avidity; and after looking at it in silence for about a minute, his feelings overcame him, and the earl started to find a tear fall in his palm.

"In the name of heaven, Wylie, what's the meaning of this?"

Andrew dropped the hand, and retired to a distance till his emotion had subsided; when coming again forward, he said, "My lord, why will ye prohibit me from being of any use to you in that concern which lies nearest your heart? This day I have been an instrument in the hand of Providence to redd the ravelled skein[1] of the poor gipsies, to whom I was, in a manner, under no obligation; but to you, who under heaven have been my great benefactor, I am still but as barren sand. The complexion of the gipsies' guilt was as black as my leddy's; your lordship

[1] *Redd the ravelled skein.* Disentangle the twisted matter.

has seen it made as pure as the driven snow. Why will you sit down in your delusion, and wear out the blithe days of life like an owl in the desert? Od, my lord, it's a fool trick; and ye maun thole wi' me till I tell you what I have discovered."

The earl was disconcerted; but, seating himself in a chair, listened while our hero related what he had heard from Doctor Saffron respecting the Italian girl and the child; at the conclusion of which he rose, and immediately left the room. Andrew would have stopped him, and indeed stepped forward to take him by the coat; but his lordship, with a hurried hand and an agitated look, shook him, as it were, away.

CHAPTER LVII

Party-Spirit.

WE must now call the attention of our readers to a series of circumstances that flowed in another channel, but at this point fall into the main stream of Wylie's story. Viscount Riversdale, the son of the Marquis of Avonside, and brother to Lady Sandyford, had been several years abroad, a voluntary exile, for reasons which neither his father nor friends were able to fathom. His conduct, indeed, like that of his more accomplished brother-in-law the earl, was to them an inexplicable enigma; but instead of rushing like him into a career of dissipation and extravagance, he shrank out of society, and abandoned himself to despondency and solitude. His health was naturally delicate, and a morbid sensibility, the symptom either of genius or of weakness, constituted the principal feature of his character.

About the time he left college, the aurora borealis of the French Revolution began to brighten in the political horizon—a morning which so many young and generous bosoms, exalted by the inspiring legends of Greek and

Roman virtue, considered as the beginning of a new day to the moral world, and the commencement of the millennium predicted by the oracles of Holy Writ. Lord Riversdale was among the number of those who devoutly worshipped the rising daystar. But Sandyford, who was then one of his most intimate friends, although he partook of the same admiration, was enabled, by the possession of a more commanding and perspicacious genius, to discover the meteoric splendour of the phenomenon; and he not only occasionally laughed at the glorious anticipations of Riversdale, but sometimes insinuated that his ardour would cool, and that he would yet be found among the champions of ancient institutions. This raillery was but the playful ridicule of a superior mind, amused with the raptures of a fond enthusiasm; and it was expressed in terms which never gave offence, though it often provoked the most vehement declarations of constancy to the cause of the new-born liberty.

At the time of the earl's marriage Lord Riversdale was returned to Parliament, and took up his residence in town with the marquis, his father. According to the hereditary politics and party connections of the old peer, his lordship was introduced to many of the most distinguished members of both Houses, who had adopted the opinions and views of Mr Burke; and it never occurred to his ingenuous mind that the courtesies of social intercourse could be supposed to

deteriorate the integrity of his public principles. Sandyford, however, warned him to the contrary; but a false pride made him glory in the ordeal to which he was subjected, and even to cultivate a greater degree of intimacy with some of the leading members of the ministerial party than he would otherwise perhaps have done. Along with his father, he accepted invitation after invitation from the adversaries, as he considered them, of freedom; but still he assured his political friends that he was invulnerable to the blandishments of power.

On the day when Parliament assembled for the first time after his election, he went with his father to the House. The marquis had occasion to call on the minister, and they met him in Downing Street. Without the slightest consideration on either side, the minister was invited to accept a seat in their carriage; and on being set down at the entrance to the House of Commons, in ascending the stairs he took hold of Riversdale by the arm, and they walked in together. This was observed by his lordship's friends in the House, and the most corrupt construction was put upon the incident; for they regarded it as the realisation of a junction which they had begun to suspect would be the result of the intercourse which he had so unnecessarily cultivated.

The infirm health of Riversdale made him suffer from the extreme heat of the crowded

House, and he retired early,—with the intention, however, of returning; but the division on the Address took place before he came back, and this—the effect solely of constitutional infirmity—was attributed to political apostasy.

The same night it was resolved, in the acrimonious spirit of that period, by those to whom he had in principle allied himself, that they should sever themselves from all communion with him. This rash determination, taken without inquiry, was as little honourable to them as it was derogatory to him; but the consequences smote him like the influence of a malignant spell. And when Lord Sandyford explained to him the cause of the altered behaviour of his political associates, he was so mortified at the thought of being considered so weak in virtue and so flexible in principle that he abruptly quitted London, and gave up his seat in the House of Commons. The humiliating idea preyed upon his spirits, and he fell into a low and querulous misanthropy, which at last assumed the character of actual disease. Advised by his physicians to travel, he went abroad; and during the interval which elapsed between the first session of Parliament after Lord Sandyford's marriage and the epoch at which we are now arrived in our story, he had continued wandering over the Continent without finding any relief from the anguish of his mortified sensibility.

His sequestration from public life was lamented

by his father as one of the severest misfortunes; for he had formed high, perhaps inordinate, expectations from the abilities of Riversdale. Such, indeed, was the paternal partiality of the marquis that he could patiently endure to hear him expatiate on those hopes and prospects of perpetual peace and felicity which the mob of Paris were supposed to be then unfolding to man, persuaded that his utopian reveries, like the fumes of the fermenting vintage, which pass off as the juice resolves itself into the bright and generous wine, would evaporate with the warmth and enthusiasm of youth.

And he often entreated him to return home and take what side he pleased in politics. "Let no filial sentiment of deference to me," said his lordship, "have any effect on the free exercise of your judgment; for whatever difference may at present exist between our political principles, I know that you will in time see the true interests of your country in the same light that I do, and, like me, exert your best talents to uphold and promote them. Therefore, I again repeat, Come home, and come free. All I desire is, to see you qualifying yourself in Parliament to take that part in the great affairs of the kingdom which, I am proud to say, our ancestors have, for so many ages, sustained with such renown."

Riversdale, however, was deaf to all these entreaties; but a letter from his sister, written

soon after she had taken up her abode at Bretonsbield Castle, produced the desired event. She informed him of all the circumstances which we have so faithfully described, and requested him to come to her; for the thought of living under the evil opinion of the world and in the contempt of her husband was become too much for her long to endure. The moment that he received this disconsolate and anxious letter he returned to England, and, on his arrival, went at once to Chastington Hall; for although Lord Sandyford shared in that aimless resentment which the sense of mortification made him feel against all his early associates, he still entertained a profound respect for the honour and principles of his lordship, and was eager, before seeing either his sister or father, to obtain from him some account of the circumstances which had involved the countess in such difficulties and distress. But when he reached the Hall the earl had set out to attend the trial of the gipsies, whither he resolved to follow him. Being, however, as we have mentioned, in delicate health, he travelled slower, and in consequence did not arrive till some time after the acquittal.

CHAPTER LVIII

A Journey.

THE landlord had assisted Lord Riversdale to alight from the post-chaise in which he travelled, and, on his asking for the Earl of Sandyford, ushered him into the room where our hero was still standing, agitated with sympathy for the mental anguish which his patron was so evidently suffering.

Wylie, on Lord Riversdale's being announced, instantly recognised the brother of Lady Sandyford, for although he had never seen him, he was acquainted with his title and relationship; and an indescribable feeling of alarm at the moment made him dart towards the pale and querulous invalid a shrewd and distrustful glance.

"I was told that my Lord Sandyford was here," said Riversdale inquiringly, at the same time moving round to retire.

"He has just stepped out," replied our hero. "I expect him back—please take a seat till he comes." He then added, somewhat diffidently, "Perhaps I ought to let him know that it is your lordship who has called."

Riversdale was struck with the tone in which this was said, and, sharply inspecting Wylie with his bright and hectical eye, said—

"You are in his lordship's confidence, I presume, from your supposing that it may be necessary to give him time to reflect whether he ought to see me?"

Our hero, at these words, walked up close to his lordship, and stopping with an air of resolution and firmness, said to him calmly, but with a sustained voice, "The earl is my friend and benefactor, and I have just been speaking to him, maybe on that account, a thought ouer freely; and, therefore, if ye'll be advised by me, ye'll no seek to see him till we learn the upshot of my exhortation, which was all concerning the calamitous state of that poor leddy, your lordship's sister."

"Who are you?" exclaimed Riversdale, surprised at such freedom.

"A friend!" replied Andrew coolly to the sharp accent in which this question was peevishly expressed; and then he added briskly, "Indeed, my lord, you must submit in this matter to be ruled by me; for the earl has of late grown a perfect spunky, and flies off at the head like a bottle of champagne whenever onybody speaks to him of my leddy."

Lord Riversdale retired several paces, and took a chair, looking in amazement at the familiar and uncouth phenomenon before him. Andrew followed him, and also took a seat near him, saying,

"My lord, I redd[1] ye hearken to what I am saying. It has just come into my head that it would be a great thing for our friends if you and me, before fashing the earl ony mair at this present time, could have a solid crack and confable with the countess, in yon old warlock tower, where she's sitting like a howlet. What say ye till't?"

"This is the most extraordinary adventure I ever met with," said Riversdale. "There must be some singular cause for a person of your appearance——"

"What's the matter with my appearance?" cried Andrew impatiently; "and what has it to do with prudence and truth? Your leddy sister, my lord, (or I'm far wrang), will be very glad to see me with you. In trouth, we'll just have to come away, for ye're ouer thin-skinned to be left wi' ane so short in the temper as the earl is at this time. There's ill blood enough among you already."

"I do not think," replied the viscount, half smiling, "that there is, however, any great reason to apprehend a quarrel between Sandyford and me: we know each other too well."

"All that's very true," said Andrew; "but I'll no trust you, and for this plain reason: his lordship's no willing to do your sister justice. Noo, if ye're a man of spirit, as ye're a nobleman, what can come out of such a case but swords out of their sheaths?"

"It is impossible that Sandyford can ever act

[1] *Redd.* Advise.

so basely!" exclaimed Riversdale, still more and more astonished.

"Whether it be possible or no," replied our hero, "I'll no take it upon me to predicate; but that it's true is a certain fact."

"Then it is the more necessary that I should instantly see him," cried the viscount, trembling with emotion and rising hastily.

"Hooly, hooly," said Andrew, laying his hand on his lordship's arm and gently pressing him again into his chair. "Lordsake, but ye're a tap o' tow![1] Sit down, and listen with discretion to what I would say. The devil's hyte[2] among the folk."

Lord Riversdale resumed his seat, and our hero explained to him the system of self-affliction which the earl had seemingly adopted, and described the circumstances which had come to his knowledge respecting the child, and the interviews between the countess and Ferrers.

"From all this, my lord, ye see there's still a mist hanging about her leddyship; and, considering the humour my lord's in, I really think we had better see her anent the same."

Riversdale was struck with the sense that shone through the account which our hero gave of the earl's situation and feelings, and could not but acknowledge that there was much which Lady Sandyford alone could explain.

[1] *Tap o' tow.* The top of tow or lint top upon the distaff.
[2] *Hyte.* Raging.

After some further conversation on the subject, therefore, he agreed that they should immediately set out for Bretonsbield Castle, "and leave the earl," as Andrew said, "to his own meditations; for we'll either make a spoon or spoil a horn by the journey, and the sooner the job's done the better."

A chaise was accordingly ordered, and before Lord Sandyford was informed of his brother-in-law's arrival they were far on the road.

During the journey, however, the viscount, who had been fatigued by his previous travelling, his health being delicate and infirm, before they were half-way to the castle complained so much that Wylie advised him to stop at an inn for the night; and this suggestion being adopted, our hero went forward alone to the countess.

CHAPTER LIX

Discoveries.

IN the course of about half-an-hour after Lord Riversdale and Wylie had set out for Bretonsbield Castle, the earl returned to the room where he had left the latter, and found Blondell there alone. Without adverting to our hero's absence, his lordship began to speak of the trial, and to express his admiration of the skill and discernment with which the defence had been conducted.

"The sagacity of Mr Wylie," replied the barrister, "appears to me indeed still more and more surprising; for since the court adjourned, several gentlemen who were present at the trial have come to me, and thrown such light on the instigating motives of Sir Hubert Mowbray as fills me with awe and astonishment. The information of the old woman, considering her means of acquiring it and the short time she had to make the inquiry, was truly wonderful; but the manner in which Mr Wylie conceived it might be rendered so available to the defence seems to have been a providential inspiration."

"What are the facts that have since come to your knowledge?" said the earl.

"In themselves," replied Blondell, "they are trivial; but in connection with such a character as that of Sir Hubert—persevering, implacable, and proud—they are tremendous and appalling. It now appears that, on the day preceding the murder, Knarl and the baronet met at Kidderborough races, beyond the forest. Among other strangers who happened to be there were several gentlemen who had known Knarl in his better days, who, seeing him in the crowd at the bottom of the stand, where they had so often before met him on equal terms, from a feeling of old companionship invited him to come up among them. He had not, however, been long in the stand till he was recognised by Sir Hubert, who reddened, as it was remarked, with indignation at his supposed presumption, and remonstrated with the steward of the races against the impropriety of allowing a person of his condition and character to be seen among them. Knarl did not hear what passed; but when he received a hint from one of his friends that some objection was made to his appearance on the stand, he justly attributed the request that he should leave the place to the unappeasable resentment of his old adversary. Nothing more, however, then took place. Knarl, on quitting the stand, retired from the race-ground."

"What you say is certainly impressive," ob-

served Lord Sandyford; "but the inference I should draw from it would tend to persuade me that a quarrel probably took place, and that, after all, Knarl may have been slain by Sir Hubert in self-defence."

"True, my lord," said Blondell, "but other things have come out. The expulsion from the race-stand was a link wanting in the old woman's discoveries. It has now been ascertained that Knarl, after quitting the racecourse, went to a public-house, where he sat sullenly indulging in solitary intemperance till he was quite intoxicated. Sir Hubert, after the race was over, dined with the stewards and a large party of gentlemen. While they were at dinner Knarl left Kidderborough alone on foot, and during the thunderstorm took refuge in a shed, where several other persons who had been at the races were standing for shelter. Here the information of the old gipsy again comes to bear; for it was from some of those whom Knarl joined in the shed that she gathered her account of their renewed enmity."

"And what passed?" said the earl eagerly, interested by the narrative.

"While the storm was still raging, Sir Hubert, attended by his groom, came up to the shed, and, dismounting, went also in for shelter—where he had not long been when Knarl recognised him, and taunted him in terms of great bitterness, accused him of a systematic determi-

nation to grind him to ruin, and upbraided him with the subtle vengeance of that friendship with which he had deceived the rest of the world."

"How did Sir Hubert endure this?" inquired Lord Sandyford with agitation.

"He remained perfectly silent, till the infatuated Knarl, losing all self-command, threatened to lay before the world a history of their intercourse, the original motives of Sir Hubert's hatred, and the malignancy of the favours by which, after destroying him in the opinion of the world, he had sunk him for ever into the more horrible perdition of his own opinion."

"And what was the effect of all this?" exclaimed the earl.

"It was noticed by the glare of the lightning," replied Blondell, "that Sir Hubert, who was standing with his hands clasped over his heart and breathing shortly, scowled with his eyes turned askance towards Knarl. 'His look,' said the person who told me, 'though seen but for a moment, I shall never forget.'"

"I perceive," said his lordship, "that you infer he at that time meditated the murder."

"Even so; and I am confirmed in this opinion," was Blondell's answer, "by the circumstance that Sir Hubert abruptly called Jenkins, the groom, who, it appears, was standing with the horses at some distance, and although the rain was then falling in torrents, immediately mounted and returned to Kidderborough, professedly for the

night, but certainly, it would seem, with no such intention; for when Sir Hubert got back to the inn, he ordered his servant to keep the horses still saddled. This I have now learned from Jenkins himself; and as soon as the storm abated they resumed their journey homeward, and rode with unusual speed till they reached the skirts of the forest. On entering the forest Sir Hubert slackened his haste, and began to speak of his intention of going next day to Sir Thomas Fowler's fox-chase, a thing which he had never mentioned before. At last they came up with Knarl. The night being fine and the moon bright, on seeing him before them Sir Hubert clapped spurs to his horse and passed him without speaking. Jenkins thought this was to avoid his abuse; but they had not ridden far when the baronet again pulled in, and desired the groom to go forward to the town and order a chaise to take him over next day to the hunt. It cannot, therefore, be doubted that the murder was most foully premeditated, and that, the moment Jenkins had left him, the baronet returned and perpetrated the deed."

"I know not why it is," said the earl, "that we should feel satisfied at hearing guilt so clearly established. But what has become of Wylie?" and his lordship immediately rang the bell. It happened to be answered by one of his own servants, who, not aware of Lord Riversdale's arrival, but having seen our hero embark with

him in the carriage for Bretonsbield Castle, said, on being requested by his lordship to inquire for Mr Wylie, "that he had left the town with a strange gentleman in a post-chaise."

Lord Sandyford was troubled at this information: he was sensible of having rudely quitted Wylie in the agitation of the moment, and uneasy lest he should have offended his sensibility. Blondell, seeing him disturbed, immediately retired, and his lordship, after pacing the room thoughtfully, ordered his carriage, and returned to Chastington Hall, leaving a note for Andrew, earnestly requesting him to follow him there as soon as possible.

CHAPTER LX

A Visit.

THE evening was far advanced before Wylie reached the castle; and when he rang the bell at the gate, the countess was seated at her solitary tea-table. On hearing his well-known and familiar voice in the passage, as he was coming along in jocular conversation with Flounce, she rose and opened the door to receive him.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr Wylie!" she exclaimed, as she took him by both the hands, with a cordiality very different from the measured urbanity of her former politeness. He was not prepared for the friendliness of this freedom, and at the first was a little embarrassed; nor was he insensible to a feeling allied to sorrow when, instead of the splendid woman whom he had been accustomed to see adorned and surrounded with the brilliant ensigns of gaiety and fashion, he beheld her pale and dressed with extreme simplicity.

The countess herself placed a chair for him near her own at the tea-table, and, before he had time to address her, said, "I presume you

have been at Chastington Hall?" and her accents faltered as she added, "I hope you have left my lord well?"

Andrew replied drolling, but with a look which the countess perfectly understood: "As to his being weel, that's a thing I canna undertake to swear to; but for a sign of his condition I would say to your leddyship, ony harl of health[1] he has is aye about meal-time. But, my leddy, this is an unco awsome house for you to live in. I'm no surprised that ye should be so fain to see a gay gallant like me coming on a visitation. Ah! Ye would need to make mickle o' your visitors or they'll no stay lang; for there's but little mirth where the only spring that's played is by the wind fifeing on the keyhole. I see your leddyship is surprised at my coming, and ye dinna think I am here without an errand."

The countess sighed, and made no reply, although Andrew paused as if he expected she would. He then resumed, "Surely, my leddy, this gait of making yourself a nun is no what might have been hoped from a woman of your sense, and at your time of life."

"I have not renounced the world," said the countess; "I am only waiting here——" and she paused confused, conscious that the ambiguity of her expressions was liable to be misinterpreted.

"Waiting?" said our hero eagerly: "for what are you waiting?"

[1] *Harl of health.* Occasional fit of health.

"Do not misunderstand me," she cried hastily. "I am only waiting to see what is to be the result of this strange state into which I have been thrown. I feel myself entangled in a net from which I cannot extricate myself. My fate is ravelled with circumstances beyond my control. The world may believe me worthy of the abandonment that I suffer—the fruit of one trifling indiscretion. Conscious of my innocence, and confident that sooner or later I shall be indemnified for what I now endure, I wait patiently the natural development of the mystery with which I am involved."

"By the 'indiscretion' your leddyship means, I suppose, following the rash counsel of that diplomatical body, my lord marquis, your father?"

"Your supposition is just. I have no other error of conduct towards my husband for which I can be blamed with any severity."

"Then, if your leddyship is sensible of that fault, what for will ye no try to amend it? If ye ran awa' from your gudeman in a pet, surely, whenever ye came to your senses, you ought to have gone back to him, wi' a napkin at your e'e, an' it had only been a sham for decency."

"Why, Mr Wylie," said the countess, smiling at the figure he had employed, "I think, when I left my father and went to Elderbower to the dowager, I did nearly as much as in reason could be expected from a woman that thought herself but half in the wrong."

"As to that I'll say nothing; but ye know that women—the present company, of course, excepted—are kittle cattle to deal with."

"Mr Wylie, this conversation is becoming painful to me. I am so circumstanced that I know not what to do. If I could see my way clearly I should require no prompting."

The countess, after a pause of about a minute, added, "I will deal frankly with you; although, as a woman, I do think that if Sandyford wished for a reconciliation, he ought, as a man, to come to me himself. It would be an act of grace and love, and I would ever esteem it as such. Yet, as a wife, I will stand on no such etiquette. Does he desire to live with me again? Say so, and I will instantly go to him, and endeavour to forget all the past, and to devote my life to promote his happiness."

Andrew was thunderstruck; he found himself in a dilemma that he had never imagined possible. He had formed no adequate conception of the united strength and magnanimity of her ladyship's character, and exclaimed, "My lord is a fool, and no sensible of his mercies, nor the value of the pearl he casts away!"

The countess smiled at this warmth, and, pleased with the compliment, said, "Come, come, my friend, let us drop the subject. I see how it is. I know Sandyford better than you do. I have discovered his nature more by reflection since we parted than by experience when we

were man and wife. He will rather continue, against his conscience, and even inclinations, in error, than be, as he deems it, so weak as to acknowledge he has acted wrong. I cannot go to him unless he wishes it."

"I did not say," exclaimed our hero, glad to catch at this expression, "that he does not wish it. On the contrary, I do with sincerity believe that nothing on earth would give him more pleasure than the sight of your leddyship at Chastington Hall. But——" and he paused.

Her ladyship saw him confused and diffident, the consequence, at that moment, of his reluctance to advert to the affair of Ferrers. In fact, he was more satisfied by her sentiments and manner than he could have been by any explanation; and, after a momentary pause, in which he decided to say nothing on that subject, he resumed in a lively key, "But, no to talk about such melancholious concerns, I have brought blithe news. Your leddyship's brother's come home, and will be here betimes the morn's morning. Poor lad! he's no very strong, and unco easily fashed; so I left him on the road to come on at his leisure." He then explained to her more circumstantially how they had accidentally met, and the motives which induced him to keep him from seeing Lord Sandyford.

The countess, who had listened calmly to the whole narrative, said, with an accent that completely for a moment disconcerted our hero,

"Why should you have supposed that there was any likelihood of the two quarrelling? Surely there is nothing in my case to provoke a quarrel."

"I'm no sure of that," said Wylie unguardedly. "In a word, my leddy, the earl is as dure as a door-nail, and winna listen even to the vindication of your leddyship's character."

The countess looked for a moment wildly; but a few tears coming to her relief, she said, "I did not think that Sandyford cared so little for me."

The tone of pathetic dejection in which this was uttered pierced the heart of Wylie. He perceived the error he had committed, or rather the erroneous interpretation which the countess had given to his words, and, eager to set her right, said, "I doubt, my leddy, it comes from another cause. He cares more for you than he will allow either himself or any other body to think; and I fancy that his contrariness is altogether of some misleart crancum[1] about your caring nothing for him. However, we'll see what's to be said on this head the morn, when your leddyship's brother comes. But it would save baith him and me a world of trouble if you would just put your heel in your neck, and tumble at ance ouer to Chastington Hall, and come to a right understanding with your gude-

[1] *Misleart crancum.* Mistaken captiousness.

man himself, without the interloping of any other friends."

The countess smiled, and, during the remainder of the evening, turned the conversation into a lighter strain, chiefly relative to the state of her friends in town.

CHAPTER LXI

Magnanimity.

THE following morning was grey and lowering, and when Lord Riversdale approached Bretonsbield Castle, which he had never before seen, the aspect of its old magnificence, and the walls and towers, hoary with the lichens of antiquity and darkened with the shadow of past time, impressed his imagination and awakened associations of the most solemn and affecting kind. The reveries of his early enthusiasm had long passed away, and the horrors of that anarchy which, under the name of Freedom, committed such crimes for the personal aggrandisement of a few intrepid adventurers, had produced the change that Lord Sandyford had predicted, and taught him to cling with filial love and admiration to the institutions of his native land. It seemed to him as the castle rose before him, over the mists which floated along the surface of the downs and gave to it the appearance of some majestical edifice constructed by necromancy in the clouds, that it was a superb type of that vast and venerable moral fabric which the wisdom,

the achievements, and the virtues of ages have reared in this country; and he felt, as it were, rebuked by the genius of England for having so long, from peevish motives of resentment, neglected to perform his proper part in those great controversies which have for their object the perpetual renovation of the pile.

When he reached the gate, he was informed that our hero was abroad walking, and that the countess had not then made her appearance. He was, in consequence, shown into the breakfast-parlour, where he sat for some time alone, ruminating on the feelings we have described, and tenderly affected towards his sister, whom he had left the pride of beauty and the ornament of fashion, but had returned to seek in a seclusion and solitude where every object indicated neglect, oblivion, and decay. These reflections gave a colouring of melancholy to his mind; and, instead of that peevish sensibility which had rendered him almost unfit for social intercourse, he became mild and compassionate, and was moved into a sad but pleasing gentleness that qualified him to listen with indulgence and pity to any narration of error or of sorrow. Accordingly, when, on being informed of his arrival, the countess hastened to embrace him, he received her with a warmth of affection that was delightful to himself, and she was so much affected by his emotion and sympathy that she wept profusely on his shoulder.

"Hey!" cried Wylie, who entered at the

moment, and, perceiving how much they were affected, was anxious to divert their attention, "is my lord on wing already?"

"What do you mean?" cried Riversdale, disengaging himself from his sister.

"Oh, naething at all!" replied Andrew. "But it's no the use and wont of welcoming to be play-actoring in sic a tragical fashion. In trouth, my leddy and my lord, it will not do, considering the job we hae in hand, to be singing, 'Waly, waly, up yon bank, and waly, waly, down yon brae,' like Lady Bothwell when her lord had left her. We live in times when tears are gone greatly out of fashion: maybe love and affection do na burn the brighter for a' that. Howsoever, we should conform, and therefore I take it upon me to inhibit you from a' sort of opera-like antics till we hae come to a right understanding wi' the breakfast-table. For I'm of a serious opinion that a weel-boiled egg, in a raw cold morning like this, is worth mair than a pint-stoup of salt tears or a piper's bag of sighs and sobbing."

This whimsical address had the effect intended, and after a few other light and gay expressions, partly allusive to the object of the meeting, the party sat down to breakfast with a degree of cheerfulness scarcely to have been expected from the impassioned anguish with which the countess and her brother had embraced.

"Weel, my leddy," said Andrew, when they had finished breakfast and retired to her favourite

room in the octagon tower, "I hae been thinking all night about you, and that whirligig, my Lord Sandyford, and I can mak nothing of your case but this: you would fain go back to him, and he wishes you would come, but he has his doubts."

"Doubts!" exclaimed the countess with agitation; and she added, with a sigh, "I cannot remove them."

She then recounted, with a composed but impressive voice, the whole circumstances relative to the child and to Ferrers, and entered into a very circumstantial explanation with her brother respecting the pertinacious attentions of the maniac.

"It's a pity," said Lord Riversdale to the countess, "that Lord Sandyford cannot hear you report this. His candour would, without further investigation, be satisfied."

"But I fear," replied her ladyship, "that he cares little whether I am innocent or guilty."

"The deevil's in this world!" exclaimed Andrew, "if folk must suffer wrong without the hope of redress."

"I should think," said Riversdale pensively, "that were Sandyford once convinced of the fallacious appearance that has wrecked the happiness of you both, he would not scruple to restore you to his affections."

"As for convincing," said her ladyship, "that cannot be difficult. More than twenty witnesses can prove all that I have stated about Ferrers;

and it was on that account, Riversdale, I requested you to come to England. I wish you to investigate the whole business thoroughly, and lay the result before my husband; not, however, in the hope that it will induce him to make any change in the determination he has taken, for long, long before the fatal paragraph his heart was turned against me."

"Not his heart," said Andrew quietly, "only his head. I dinna think he's very sound in the judgment about your leddyship."

"Ah, Wylie!" exclaimed the countess, "do not call his judgment in question, for my own feelings bear testimony to its rectitude and discernment. I wonder he endured me so long."

The Siddonian majesty and pathos in which this was said made our hero thrill with admiration and awe; while Lord Riversdale, unable to suppress his emotion, rose, and walking to one of the windows, stood for some time looking out, deeply agitated. He, however, was the first who broke silence.

"Augusta," said he, "I will see Sandyford. It is impossible that he can suffer such immolation. I once knew him; and he must, indeed, be deplorably fallen from his original brightness if he can be insensible to the grief which dictates such a sentiment."

The countess looked at her brother calmly for about the space of a minute, and then said, "Riversdale, I thought you knew me better. But no—

for till lately I knew not myself. I will never be received by Sandyford in compassion—mark that —never be an object of his pity—no, not even of his generosity. I will take nothing less than his love; not that I say it is mine of right, but because I would now deserve it."

And in saying these words she immediately quitted the room, leaving her brother at once perplexed and surprised.

"Weel, I think, my lord," said our hero, "was ever twa sic deevil's buckies cleckit,[1] to fash simple folk, like you and me, as this mighty madam and her flea-luggit lord? Odsake, if it werena for ae thing mair than another, I would grip the twa by the cuff of the neck and haud their noses to the grindstane. They deserve no mercy! But, my lord, the Sorrow's[2] in them or they get the better o' me. We'll e'en awa' to Chastington Hall, and see what Birky, or Belzebub, or whatever ye like to ca' that thrawn gude-brother o' yours, has to say till't; for I'll no let them ding[3] me, noo that my heart's set to mak them happy, in spite o' their teeth."

"You are an incomprehensible being," replied Lord Riversdale, "and I feel the force of your good sense constraining me to act, where delicacy, although it is my sister's case, almost makes me shrink from any further proceeding."

[1] *Deevil's buckies cleckit.* Perverse people born.
[2] *Sorrow.* The word is used as if to denote a personification.
[3] *Ding.* Overcome.

"Poo! what's delicacy, my lord," exclaimed Andrew, laughing, "but a bashful missy sort o' thing? I hae nae broo[1] o' sic havers when I'm in earnest; so we'll just take back the chaise your lordship came hither in, and set off to Chastington without ony more parley about the matter."

"I doubt," said Riversdale, "my health will not allow me to travel either so fast or so far."

"Noo, that comes of your delicates," cried Andrew. "If ye hadna been nursing your hypochondriacs to make them thrive, ye would never hae thought about the travel or the road. Odsake, my lord, if ye're long in my hands, I'll put mair smeddum[2] in you! So just come away at ance, and leave the countess to play at the chucks[3] with her thimble, a bawbee, and a tamarind-stane till we come back. Indeed, my lord, ye maun gae wi' me, for I'm playing the truant ouer lang; and if Mr Vellum didna think I was on some business of Lord Sandyford's, I wouldna be surprised if he gave me a loofy[4] when I gaed hame."

The impetuosity of Andrew succeeded, and they were, in the course of a few minutes, on the road to Chastington Hall.

[1] *Broo.* Favourable opinion.
[2] *Smeddum.* Mettle.
[3] The *chucks* is a game played by girls with pebbles.
[4] *Loofy.* A stroke on the *loof* or palm.

CHAPTER LXII

Fortune-telling.

AFTER the trial, the gipsies, who had so abruptly left the town, proceeded straight towards Chastington, whither they had learned our hero was expected to return with the earl; and having encamped under the park-wall, they gleaned from among the woodmen and labourers something of the situation of Lord and Lady Sandyford, and of the familiarity with which Wylie was treated by his lordship. The principal motive of this journey was, doubtless, dictated by gratitude, in order to offer their thanks in a more formal manner than they could well do in the town where they were so much objects of interest.

That there are persons in the world who not only pretend to possess, but believe they actually do possess, supernatural discernment, and also a very numerous multitude of all degrees and ages who give them full credit, cannot be denied. Far, therefore, be it from us to encourage any scepticism to the prejudice of a faith so venerable; especially as it was certain that our old

gipsy woman had the most perfect confidence in her own oracular powers.

On the morning after the trial she was lingering about the portal of the hall when the earl came out, and she immediately addressed him. "We have come," said she, "to thank you and the clear spirit in the small tabernacle for the salvation we enjoy. You have fee'd us, by kindness, to do your bidding, wheresoever the task may lie. Is there aught wherein our hands may work, or our spirits toil, or our skill serve, or our goodwill aid? Speak, and give us pleasure!" And she paused abruptly and looked steadily in his lordship's face.

"Why do you look so at me?" exclaimed the earl, surprised, and in some degree offended.

"There's a wish in your heart, my lord," was the reply, "that you hide from yourself; a vision in your dreams, my lord, that you banish on waking."

The frame of mind in which his lordship was at the time, and the tinge of melancholy with which his reflections had for several months been imbued, made him peculiarly susceptible to fanciful impressions, and he felt something akin to dread at this singular apostrophe. The sharp-sighted gipsy perceived the influence of her crafty mysticism, and spoke, in a low and confiding accent, to the following effect:

"There are times and seasons when the stars above favour intents below, when the moon

searches the blood, and the planets point with their fingers of light to the progeny of coming time. In this hour their benign influences are upon me; and, would ye read a page in the book of destiny, I can unclasp the volume. Have faith in me when the spirit of oracles is upon me; when it departs, you will then ask my wisdom in vain."

The earl endeavoured to smile at this rhapsody, while he trembled at the prophetic energy of the sibyl, and at her request held out his hand.

"This palm is empty," said the old woman.

The earl laughed, and put half-a-crown into it from his pocket.

The old woman flung away the money with contempt, and added, with tremendous solemnity, "That palm is empty, and yearns to press its fellow in kindness. What do I see?"

"I hope no evil!" said the earl, thrown off his guard.

"I thought," said the old woman calmly, "that I had seen the mark of a broken wedding-ring. That would betoken death; but I am mistaken, the sign shows only——" and she paused.

"Why do you hesitate?" said Lord Sandyford, deeply and strangely affected.

"The lamp of our skill," replied the gipsy, "burns but dimly: all things are not seen as we would see them. But if I might speak without offence——"

"Certainly," said the earl.

The sorceress then looked at him severely, and said, "I speak with spirits, and yours communes with mine. The wedding-ring I saw is not broken; you but wilfully hide a part within your own flesh, causing to yourself suffering and sorrow."

The old woman then broke out with the energy of the Pythia, and predicted, in a long rhapsody of meaningless images, an endless life of conjugal bliss to his lordship, which had the effect of recovering him from the brief influence of the superstitious sentiments she had inspired. But although he laughed at her predictions, his mind retained the colouring, and he returned into the house, after liberally rewarding her, thoughtful and uneasy, under a mingled charm of hope and apprehension, incredulity and faith.

In the meantime our hero and Lord Riversdale were on their way from Bretonsbield Castle to Chastington. They reached the Sandyford Arms, at the park gate, just as the old woman was returning from her interview with the earl. Andrew immediately called to the post-boys to stop, saying in the same breath to the viscount, "That auld wife is another Witch of Endor, or a Maggy Lang;[1] I wonder what she can have been doing at the Hall. Hey, lucky!" he then exclaimed, addressing himself to her.

The gipsy came up instantly to the carriage

[1] *Maggy Lang.* Margaret Lang, who was tried and executed, with seven others, at Paisley, at the end of the seventeenth century, for bewitching a daughter of John Shaw of Bargarren.

window, and, with her characteristic rhodomontade, began, much in the same style as she had addressed Lord Sandyford, to proffer the services of herself and all her tribe.

"Maybe," said our hero, "I shall have a bit job by-and-by in your way, when I have hens and cocks, or silver spoons, that can be stolen. But what have ye been doing with my lord?"

"I have read his fortune," was the emphatic reply.

"Ay, a wheen lees,[1] nae dout; and what said ye?" cried Andrew.

Lord Riversdale sat surprised at their conversation, and at the wild and haggard appearance of the old woman, as she thus replied: "I saw his empty palm, and his wedding-ring, that is not broken, but only hidden in the throbbing flesh. A cloud is around him, but it is not night; the summer of his days is yet to come, and along the avenue of future years, when he lies down to sleep on his mother's bosom, I beheld the rose of beauty and the oak of manhood bend their blooming and green heads in honour over him."

"Awa, awa, the deil's ouer grit wi' you!"[2] cried Andrew, endeavouring to laugh, while he looked at Lord Riversdale, and inwardly confessed his faith in what she said. "Hae, there's half-a-crown

[1] *A wheen lees.* A parcel of lies.

[2] *The deil's ouer grit (intimate) wi' you.* An old Scotch saying whispered by Sir Walter Scott in the ear of Miss Stirling Graham when she was mystifying a company at Lord Gillies's as Mrs. Arbuthnott of Balwylie.

for boding so meikle luck to my lord, and when I have time, I must see if ye can wyse[1] to me a bonny lass with a heap o' siller."

The fortune-teller, in the instant, was evidently kindling again into another paroxysm; but Lord Riversdale peevishly pulled up the window and requested the post-boys to drive on. "Is it possible," said he, "that Sandyford could listen to the hag's nonsense?"

"Trouth, my lord, it's very possible; and I wouldna be surprised that she had done mair to bring him into a right way of thinking than both of us, without her help, could have done."

"You seem to undervalue his lordship's good sense if you expect any such effect," was the sharp remark of the viscount.

"Ye're a' wrang, my lord," replied our hero. "If the yerl had as little sense as the rest of the world, it might be so; but he's what's ca'd a man o' genius, and he'll create, by his own ingenuity, something rational out of the auld wife's raving that would never enter ony common head."

In this sort of conversation they continued speaking till the chaise arrived at the portal of the mansion. On alighting there, Lord Riversdale was conducted to one of the drawing-rooms, and our hero alone sought the earl in the library, where he was sitting by himself in a reverie, and, perhaps, unconsciously still under the influence of the gipsy's rhapsodies.

[1] *Wyse.* Entice.

CHAPTER LXIII

A Friend.

THIS winna do," cried Andrew seriously, on observing the absent and melancholy look of Lord Sandyford; "your lordship's like a fat goose, drapping awa'; and if ye're no ta'en frae the fire, ye'll soon no be worth the taking."

"Ha, Wylie!" exclaimed the earl, "what has become of you? Why did you quit me so abruptly?"

"Me quit you, my lord! How can that be said when you stotted yoursel' out o' the room like a birsled[1] pea?"

"Well, but where have you been? What have you been doing?" rejoined his lordship.

"It'll require thought to answer twa questions at once; and therefore I think we may as weel, for the present, set them by hands, for I have got dreadful news," said our hero, still gravely.

"Indeed! What are they? Have you heard anything of Lady Sandyford?" cried the earl eagerly.

"Your lordship, ye ken, has debarred me from

[1] *Stotted yoursel' . . . birsled.* Bounded . . . parched.

speaking anent her case, poor leddy; but what I have heard is another sort of thing," replied Andrew, still preserving the most serious countenance and voice.

"Have the French landed?" said his lordship gaily, endeavouring to rouse himself out of his moping humour.

"I'll no say the king's enemy has come to England; but somebody has come that your lordship, I'm thinking, will no be overly pleased to see—Lord Riversdale."

"Yes," said the earl, "he has come home; I heard of his being here."

"Yes, he's come; and it was at the request of my leddy the countess," replied Andrew.

"Was it by your advice?" inquired his lordship sternly.

But our hero was none intimidated by the severity of his manner; he felt, indeed, like the surgeon who probes the wound of a patient whom he esteems, and he disregarded the pain or the irritation which he at the moment occasioned.

"I think, my lord," said he earnestly and unaffectedly, "that it is not possible to prevent me from speaking to your lordship about my leddy. Things come round that oblige me to interfere, as if I were ordained by Heaven to be a means of mending your broken happiness. Look, my lord, how the course of fortune works to that end: I was a friendless lad, and ye gied me a nest-egg out of the magnanimity of your own free will;

that was as a retaining fee to make me serve you, through weal or woe, a' my days. Then came my forgathering in the wood with the gipsies, which led me to get a glimpse of the history of the bairn of the Rose and Crown. Syne came on the crookit case of the trial, wherein the hand of an overruling Providence was made visible, as if to admonish your lordship to have some confidence in me, your bound and obligated humble friend and true servant. Then, when ye refused to do justly and to love mercy, as I would have counselled your lordship, ye turned your back upon me, and left the room; but Fate's stronger than man. My Lord Riversdale, when ye were gone, came in: a very wonderful and mysterious thing, my lord; and, although he's no a very placable commodity, he listened to reason, and we have been thegither to hear what the countess had to say for herself."

"And what did she say?" exclaimed the earl with emotion; for our hero had skilfully turned this address to chime in unison with the mood in which the gipsy's prediction had left his lordship; but suddenly checking himself, he added proudly, "Wylie, I think this is useless conversation. Though Lady Sandyford were innocent of the suspected guilt, that fact would make no change in my determination. I will not disguise what you see clearly enough: that I still bear towards her much of my early affection; and often I think to myself that surely she is not

naturally that automaton which she has ever been with me. But it is impossible for me to submit again to lead with her the life that we have so miserably led together."

"That," said Wylie, "may be a very rational resolution in the opinion of your lordship; but it is, I'm thinking, needful that it should be explained to the satisfaction of others. Lord Riversdale will no be overly content that his sister should dree the penance of an ill-doer merely because your lordship doesna think she has been so cordial with you in all your vagaries as in the thoughtlessness of youth ye maybe expected."

"I do not think that I'm obliged to enter into any explanation with Lord Riversdale on the subject. Lady Sandyford went away of her own accord."

"That's no the point," cried Andrew; "that's no just what I was ettling at.[1] Lord Riversdale has a right, and the world has a right, to know why it is that your lordship is to be allowed to indulge your own fancies with impunity, to the damage and detriment of a noble leddy."

The earl looked amazed at the intrepidity with which this was expressed, and then said, "There is something about you, Wylie, that prevents me from quarrelling with you; but had any other man spoken to me with such an accent——"

"You would have done well to listen to him,"

[1] *Ettling at.* Aiming at.

interrupted Andrew calmly. "My lord, ye're in the wrang,—ye're far wrang; ye may set up the golden image of your own opinions, but no honest man will bend down and worship before it, especially the like of me, who, for my own credit, would have your lordship beloved and respected. Your kindness to me I would reckon a disgrace to endure, if I didna think your lordship, by nature and habit, a man from whom it was an honour to be so favoured as I have been. Therefore, my lord, you will have to see Lord Riversdale."

"I will not, Wylie, nor any other man on the subject; I do violence to my own feelings in enduring to be so lectured by you."

"I never doubted that; and if there wasna a restraining power of inordinate civility about you towards me, ye wouldna have tholed the half of what I have said, half so long," cried Andrew briskly.

"By Jove!" said Lord Sandyford, scarcely able to preserve his temper, "this is driving me to the wall with a vengeance!" and he rose and walked to one of the windows. Our hero, who had been standing during the whole conversation, waited in silence for about a minute, and he then said, "Shall I ring the bell for Lord Riversdale?"

"Is he in the house?" cried the earl, startled by the question.

"Yes," was the cool answer; "he came with me, and the sooner the business is done the better."

His lordship made no reply, but walked several times hurriedly across the floor, turning up the curls from his forehead with his hand and breathing thickly. Andrew was alarmed at his agitation, and the struggle which for some time he evidently made to control his feelings, but without effect; and said, in an accent of sorrow and anxiety, "I have gone too far: your lordship is ill."

"Not further than a friend should go—not further than a friend!" exclaimed the earl, but without looking at him.

Several minutes of silence succeeded, during which his lordship so far mastered himself that he sat down and said, with considerable ease, "It must, I perceive, Wylie, come to that at last. I will see Riversdale; but not yet. In the course of a short time bring him to me."

Our hero immediately moved to retire; but in glancing back towards the earl he was struck with the ghastly paleness of his countenance, and stopped. "Wylie," said his lordship, with a voice of the most penetrating pathos, "you have made me feel that I have been acting an unworthy part; not only my happiness but my honour is in your hands."

Andrew was profoundly affected, and took two steps towards the earl, with the intention of saying something; but his tongue refused its office, and he turned suddenly round and quitted the room.

CHAPTER LXIV

Decision.

THE interview between the earl and Lord Riversdale was conducted with some degree of formality on each side. The conversation was opened by the latter expressing his regret at the unhappy incompatibility of mind which had caused a meeting of so cold a character between them; and thence he took occasion to revert to the circumstances connected with the child and with Ferrers, observing how easily it would have been to have proved the guilt of Lady Sandyford if the slightest inquiry had been instituted.

"Had it been of any consequence to me personally, no doubt," replied the earl, "I should have instituted the investigation you speak of. But feeling, as a man of honour, that I could with no justice take any legal steps against her ladyship, it was my motive to allow her to enjoy all the benefit of that forbearance."

"But my sister is innocent,—is pure from all stain," said Riversdale, with animation.

"I rejoice to understand so," was the calm and polite remark of the earl.

"What then is to be done? Why is she to suffer all the consequences of imputed guilt?" cried the viscount somewhat sharply.

"My lord," replied the earl, "do not let us part under any misconception of this unhappy business. I have never ceased to love your sister, and I shall be proud to do everything to promote her happiness. She lives but for the admiration of the crowd, and I will supply her to the utmost limit of my income to gratify her vanity. But only on this condition: that I hear of her no more."

"She will reject with scorn all pecuniary obligations. I suspect, my lord, that you do not know her worth," replied Riversdale, with an accent so bitter that it almost threw Sandyford off his guard. He, however, maintained himself so far as to say coldly—

"Certainly I do not know her—if what I propose will not indemnify her for the loss of my company. But, my lord, I would beg your attention to one simple truth. We were for years together man and wife. In all that time she saw me plunging from error to error, rushing onward to ruin. Did it ever occasion to her a pang? Did she ever make one effort to check my infatuation? Or did ever the lucid intervals of contrition draw from her one word of soothing or of commiseration? No man need speak to me of the powers of Lady Sandyford's mind—none could be more surprised than I was at seeing such derogatory

guilt imputed to her—none questioned more the complexion of the evidence by which it seemed confirmed. I rejoice that she has convinced you of her innocence. I believe her most entirely innocent;—not merely because, as you say, her guilt, were she guilty, could be so easily proved, but because her declaration is in unison with the opinion which I entertain of her character—a moral persuasion that strong evidence indeed would be required to shake. But I would as soon take one of these china jars into my bosom for a wife as the cold, the formal, the not less artificial, Lady Sandyford. It is in vain, my lord, that you tell me of her personal innocence. She has been to me not only the cause of much misery, but an enigma that has made me doubt the value of my own senses. For I do confess to you that I have often thought there were the elements of great sensibility in your sister, but they as often eluded all my endeavours to call them forth—while she herself had no sympathy for others."

Our hero, who was present, and had hitherto sat silent, here interposed, and said, "True, my lord; but now she kens what drinkers dree;[1] for humiliation takes the stone out of the heart, as my auld schoolmaster used to say when he punished the pride of camstrarie[2] laddies—and her leddyship's a creature of a new birth."

The explanation which Lord Sandyford had given of his feelings made a profound impression

[1] *Dree.* Suffer. [2] *Camstrarie.* Froward.

on the sensitive and too delicate Riversdale, and he remained, after this address of our hero, for some time silent and thoughtful. He then rose, and said to the earl—

"My lord, I enter into the full feeling of your sentiments, and will proceed no further in this business. I lament the misfortune of my sister; but I fear it is beyond remedy."

The earl bowed, and was changing the conversation to some general topic of the day, when Andrew started up and cried, "Heavens and earth, sirs! are ye in your right senses? Is all my wark, and pains, and trouble to end in a clishmaclaver[1] about the hobleshow[2] in France? My lord, how is this? and you, Lord Riversdale, are ye doited?[3] Is Leddy Sandyford to pine in grief, under the cloud of dishonour, because the tane o' you makes blethers sound like sense, which the other takes for gospel?"

And in saying these words he abruptly left the room, and without ceremony throwing himself into the post-chaise in which he had come with Lord Riversdale, and which still stood in the court, he was beyond the park-gate, and on the road to Bretonsbield Castle, before the two noblemen recovered from the astonishment which his vehemence and sudden departure had produced.

He reached the gate just as the countess was sitting down to her early solitary dinner. Her

[1] *Clishmaclaver.* Idle discourse. [2] *Hobleshow.* Tumult. [3] *Doited.* Gone stupid.

ladyship saw, as he precipitately entered, that he brought some important news, and, ordering the servants to retire instantly, rose from table.

"Yon daffodil,[1] your brother, and that corky,[1] your gudeman, havena as meikle sense in baith their bouks[2] as your leddyship has in your wee finger; so ye maun just come away with me to Chastington Hall," exclaimed Andrew, "for I wouldna be surprised to hear of their colleaguing to put you to death."

Lady Sandyford resumed her seat, and said, "What do you mean?"

"What do I mean?" re-echoed our hero. "That ye're ouer lang here. I'm no, however, in a composure to tell you all the outs and ins of what has passed. But my lord says ye're a china flowerpot, and for that he'll no take you back; and your willy-wally[1] of a brother sympathises with the gross nonsense. Noo, my leddy, be what ye are,—come with me to Lord Sandyford: his heart is yours if he thought ye had ane to give in return. Confound him with your worth, and with that noble spirit that has made you feel so lowly; shine out with a glorious acknowledgment of past errors, and I'll lay my lugs the summer of baith your days is yet to come."

The countess smiled, and said, "I perceive my

[1] *Daffodil. Corky. Willy-wally.* Contemptuous epithets. The first occurs in the *Annals of the Parish:* "Daffadile of vanity." *Corky* seems to carry with it the sense of flightiness.

[2] *Bouks.* Bodies.

brother has given me up, and that you alone are my friend. I will go with you. It is an atonement that I make for the rashness of following my father's advice; and my heart derives an assurance from your warmth that Lord Sandyford will do justice to my endeavours to recover his affection."

"That's a braw leddy, and ye'll get a bawbee to buy an apple at the fair!" exclaimed Andrew, in that sort of kindly admiration with which a child is praised for good behaviour.

CHAPTER LXV

Love in a Dickey.

FROM a sentiment of delicacy towards Lady Sandyford, on account of the feelings with which she was at the time agitated, our hero not only declined a seat in her carriage, but insisted that her amiable abigail, Flounce, should mount the dickey with him; for, being driven by post-horses, it was in consequence empty, her ladyship not choosing to take any of her father's servants along with her.

"Up, Mrs Flounce," said he, as she was on the point of stepping into the carriage after her mistress; "up aloft. I'm going with you, and we can court there so cosily; who knows but ye may get a smart husband before long?"

Flounce was one of those sensitive maidens who never happen to be seated near a man without thinking of a lover; and she replied, with a giggle, as she eyed the dickey, "Don't be foolish—don't talk such stuff to me."

In the meanwhile he had shut the carriage-door.

"Weel, weel," said Wylie, "we'll speak of that

again; but mount, my dawty;"[1] and with that he assisted her into the dickey, and was immediately at her side.

"Flounce," said he when they were seated, "I have long had a great desire to hae some pleasant and canny conversation with you; for I hae a notion that ye're a lass of no small discretion."

The bosom of the inflammable abigail beat quickly, and she replied, "I beg, Mr Wylie, that ye'll not talk none of that there nonsense to me; for I can assure you, sir, that I don't like no such larking; so I beg you'll be quiet."

"E'en's ye like, Meg Dorts!" exclaimed our hero, glad of an opportunity to end the badinage, which he was really at that time not in a humour to carry on, and he remained silent—sulky, as Flounce thought, on account of the proper spirit she had shown; but at last she began to fancy that perhaps she had been a little too hard-hearted.

In the hurry and occupation of his mind, Andrew had entirely neglected to think of any dinner; but now that he was in some degree relieved from his anxiety, and driving as merrily along in a fine bracing air as four post-horses could bear him, Nature, who never fails to vindicate any negligence, craved at last her due share of attention, and he felt himself exceedingly hungry. Entirely forgetting what he had been saying to Flounce, though it engaged her most serious cogitations, he again addressed her with a slight

[1] *Dawty.* Darling.

accent of pathos in his voice, "Od, Mrs Flounce, but I feel something very queer about my heart."

"La!" cried the abigail, not displeased to have the conversation renewed. "How can you go for to say such things, Mr Wylie?"

"It's as sure as death; and unless I get something soon to comfort me, I dinna think I'll be able to stand out the journey," was the unaffected reply; to which he added, glancing at a basket which Flounce held in her lap, and from which the neck of a pint-bottle protruded from the midst of tawdry second-hand artificial flowers and knots of riband, "What have ye got in that basket?"

"Nothing for you," said she, with a giggle.

"Robbery!" exclaimed he in a jocular tone, but altogether unconscious of what was passing in her bosom,—"Robbery is justifiable when it's a work of needcessity; so I hae a great mind, Flounce, to see what ye hae hidden aneath thae gumflowers."[1]

"That you shan't, take my word on't," replied Flounce, with a jocund tartness; "so keep your distance, I say, and not offer for to go such lengths with me."

"Noo, really, Flounce, this is very cruel of you; for my heart begins to fail me, and I would be vastly obligated for onything of a cordial nature that ye can bestow."

The tender damsel began to feel her severity

[1] *Gumflowers.* Artificial flowers.

yielding to this sincere importunity; but still, for the honour and dignity of the sex, she was determined not to be lightly won, and she replied, "Mr Wylie, I would have you to know that I don't like any such insinivations."

"Very weel," cried Andrew, laughing, "if you won't surrender at discretion, I'll tak you by storm;" and a struggle ensued, in which Flounce made a most Amazonian resistance.

Our hero, however, was successful; but instead of seizing her by the hands and pressing them with a lover's ardour, he took hold of the basket by the handle, and, wrenching it from her grasp, flung her gumflowers away, and drew out a cold veal-pie, which, with the pint-bottle—and that contained cherry brandy—Flounce had provided for her own particular solace.

Flounce at first affected a Juno-like indignation at the rape of the basket, while in her secret bosom palpitations of delight reconciled her to the outrage. But as she was declaring her displeasure of the monstrous rudeness, and enjoying, at the same moment, the sweet anticipations of such an ardent passion, Andrew laid voracious hands on the pie, which quickly disappeared, and he completed its obsequies by a draught from the bottle.

"I'm a great deal the better o' that," said he as he coolly handed back the basket, which Flounce examined as she received it, and, seeing the pie had disappeared, cried, "Come, come, Mr

Wylie, none of your tricks upon travellers. What have you done with the pie?"

"What hae I done wi't? Put it to the use for which it was created. I hae eaten't, and a very good commodity it was. The spice, I trow, wasna spare't."

"Well, to be sure, this is one way of making love," said Flounce to herself.

"It was a most merciful thing," resumed our hero, "that ye brought the pie with you, Flounce, for really the wind had so gaen about my heart that I was growing faint."

The mortified abigail sat amazed, and at a loss what to say or do. Sometimes she eyed her companion disdainfully askance; at others, she looked into her empty basket, as if to ascertain the actual disappearance of the pasty; and anon she darted her keen eyes forward, and elevating her neck with irrepressible ire, gave her head two or three brisk shakes.

"What gars you snuff the wind at that gait,[1] Flounce?" said our hero. "I'll buy you twa bigger and better pies for't ony day."

But the indignant waiting-gentlewoman was not to be conciliated by any such sordid promises. Indeed, what woman who believed herself an object of the most tender solicitude could keep her temper on discovering that all the eagerness, which, to her fond fancy, seemed so like love, was prompted by a base and vulgar appetite to

[1] *Gars—gait.* Causes—manner.

possess her pie? Accordingly, during the remainder of the journey she was both dignified and distant to our hero; and when he attempted to renew his familiarity, after his hunger had been so effectually appeased, she repulsed him with indignation. He was, however, rather amused than disconcerted by her scorn, and took fifty ways of tormenting her, until, no longer able to bridle her rage, she assailed him with such a volley of epithets that, by the time they reached Chastington Hall, they had come to decided hostilities, and she would not permit him even to assist her to alight from the dickey; the consequence of which was that her foot slipped, and she came plump down upon the pavement, to the infinite diversion of the post-boys and of the servants, who, on hearing a carriage enter the court, had come flocking from all parts of the mansion.

CHAPTER LXVI

The Reconciliation.

FOR some time after Wylie had so abruptly quitted the earl and Lord Riversdale, they sat in visible perplexity; a desultory conversation was maintained, but so broken, and with such long intervals of silence, that it was evidently the result of constraint. Their minds were wandering to other objects of dearer interest.

At last Riversdale rose to go away, without having once again alluded to the situation of his sister; and he was too much at a loss to divine the cause of our hero's flight and absence (for he was but slightly acquainted with his direct and plain-dealing humour) to express what he felt at a behaviour which to him seemed at once so extravagant and inexplicable. Not so the earl. The idea once or twice occurred to him that Andrew was gone to bring the countess herself; but he suppressed it, in the persuasion that he would not venture to take so great a liberty. It, however, had the effect of keeping him also silent; and perhaps it unconsciously induced him to request Riversdale to stay dinner with more

earnestness than mere politeness required. Persuaded that Andrew was engaged on some business connected with the object of the viscount's visit, he was desirous that the result should be ascertained before they separated; but the mingled feelings with which he was agitated prevented him from speaking on the subject.

The forenoon was passed between them as forenoons are commonly passed by noblemen in the country. They conversed on various topics, such as ancient thrones overturned, old china, battles lost, the abolition of the German Empire, with dissertations on the prices of pictures, interspersed with mournful eulogiums on the excellent qualities of deceased friends, and monstrous good anecdotes of the most ridiculous characters living; but not a word arose with respect to that business which had brought the one from Vienna, and, with the anguish of a secret poison, searched and penetrated the very core of the other's heart.

The earl conducted his brother-in-law over the park, and showed him the changes made and contemplated; and Riversdale, who possessed a refined and elegant taste, suggested various improvements. Everything between them proceeded in the most urbane manner; but ever and anon Lord Sandyford glanced his eye towards the grand avenue, and made their walks wind among the grounds immediately in the vicinity of the mansion. Still there was no appearance of our hero; and when the first dinner-bell gave warning

that it was time to dress, they returned together, both perplexed and thoughtful, insomuch that, had they been questioned as to the topics of their previous conversation, it is probable that neither the one nor the other could have given any rational answer.

At last the sound of a carriage was heard to enter the portal; and the earl, who had by that time met Riversdale again in the drawing-room, became pale and agitated, and immediately retired. Soon after, our hero came in alone; and taking a seat abruptly without speaking, stretched out his feet, and, lying back in the chair, seemed to be gazing at the pictures on the ceiling, while his eye was constantly turning with anxiety towards the door.

Lord Riversdale looked at him with the most intense curiosity; but a feeling which he could not master deprived him of the power of speaking.

When Andrew had sat in this state for about five minutes, he rose and moved with rapid and disordered steps towards the door. In an instant, however, he checked himself, and walking calmly back to his chair, folded his arms and looked gloomily on the floor.

Another five minutes passed, and he began to rub his hair with his hand, and to beat with his heel; at last he said to Lord Riversdale, "Dog on't, but this is dreadfu'."

A servant at that moment happened to have occasion to come into the room, and as he opened

the door Andrew started up and rushed towards it; but on seeing who it was, he shrank back, and walking to one of the windows, retired behind the curtains, as if to hide the emotion of his disappointment.

"What have you done?" cried Lord Riversdale, alarmed by his strange and agitated manner.

"Made a spoon or spoilt a horn," was the impressive reply.

"For the love of heaven, explain yourself!" exclaimed his lordship earnestly.

"When my head's round again in its right posture." Then, "But hae patience till then," said our hero, becoming still more and more agitated.

"I fear——" resumed Riversdale.

"So do I—so do I!" interrupted Andrew, running out from behind the curtain; but all at once checking himself, he added calmly, "What should I fear? I hae done but what duty and honesty required of me; the issues are in the hands of Providence, and they canna be in better. My lord, we're twa fools to be racking ourselves at this gait; I ought to have mair confidence in both Lord and Lady Sandyford than to give myself up to a panic like this."

At these words several bells were rung hastily, and a bustle was heard in the gallery which led to the drawing-room. Lord Riversdale instinctively opened the door, and a blaze of lights was seen approaching. Andrew darted a hasty glance

out, and, uttering a shout of gladness and delight, rushed into the gallery, and, in less than a minute after, returned, leading the earl and countess, with such a benign expression of satisfaction in his countenance that Lord Riversdale often afterwards declared he had never seen anything half so magnificent, and wondered how a figure so mean and a physiognomy so common could bear the impress of so much dignity. When they reached the middle of the room, and when the servants, who, on hearing of their lady's arrival, attended with lights to conduct her along the gallery, had retired, Lord Sandyford said, in a gay manner, which, however, became gradually serious and elevated, "What a pity it is that the mythology of the poets is not true! I should otherwise this night have raised an altar to Mercury, and instituted some social festival in honour of him, as Andrew Wylie. My friend, you have taught me one thing: when we do an act of kindness, it is the benevolence of Heaven directing us to achieve some good for ourselves. The partiality that I from the first felt for you, which dictated to me that interest I must ever take in your welfare, was the pure prompting of my better angel to work out, through your means, the restoration of myself, of my happiness, and of this noble woman's inborn latent worth."

"Weel, weel, my lord," cried our hero, hardly able to repress the tears of joy that were starting into his eyes, "see that it be sae; but the less

that's said about byganes the better; so, as the dinner-bell's noo ringing, wi' your leave to-day, my lord, only to-day, I'll lead my leddy to her place at the table."

His lordship instantly took the countess by the hand, and with a look of thanks that was worth more than a thousand pounds weight of gold, as Andrew afterwards said, presented her to our hero. Lord Riversdale followed them mechanically, for the whole scene appeared to him as something which surpassed his comprehension.

CHAPTER LXVII

Patronage.

ALTHOUGH our hero, actuated by gratitude and affection, had laboured to effect the reconciliation of Lord and Lady Sandyford by the most direct means and with the most determined energy, yet, when the event was accomplished, it is not to be questioned that considerations less disinterested than those feelings mingled with the agreeable reflections which naturally belong to the success of a benevolent purpose. He could not but be sensible that in their happiness he had obtained a fulcrum for the engines that were to raise his own fortune, and that, in all probability, he had secured the patronage of the Marquis of Avonside, as well as that of the earl. But we should be doing him injustice to suppose that the persuasion of this produced any change in his conduct or demeanour. He had, as we have early insinuated, formed in his outset a plan of life, and to that he adhered with the constancy and the zeal of a character endowed with strong inherent powers and sensibilities, the value of which was fully appreciated by both Lord and

Lady Sandyford in a conversation with Lord Riversdale one morning after Andrew had left Chastington Hall and returned to London.

His lordship, on remarking upon his earnest simplicity and peculiar humours, observed that he thought it was the duty equally of the two families to unite their interest and influence for his advancement.

"I expect," said the countess, "that my father will feel the obligation; but for Sandyford and myself, he is our friend, and we shall never insult the greatness of his mind with the offer of any favour, for we owe him everything. Our part is to promote his happiness and his honour."

And when, in the course of a few days after this conversation, the Marquis of Avonside came to congratulate them on their reunion, the subject was renewed, with a declaration on the part of the earl that, in a pecuniary point of view, he considered his whole fortune at the disposal of Wylie; but he added, laughingly, "Perhaps, if you knew the being, my lord, you would think there was no great generosity in my saying so, though I do it with the most perfect sincerity."

"Then," replied the marquis, "I see what I ought to do. I will take him under my own particular patronage; and the first thing I shall do on my return to town will be to see him, and to ascertain what he is fit for, and then the whole weight of my influence shall be exerted in his favour."

"I doubt, my lord," replied the earl somewhat waggishly—for he did not entertain the most awful respect for the talents or the discernment of his lordship—"it will not be easy to ascertain what he is fit for; but he is able, I think, for a greater office than I conceive it is in your lordship's power to obtain."

"Lord Sandyford," said the marquis, with a manner that he meant should be emphatic, "you have taken too little interest in public affairs to know the extent of my influence with his Majesty's Government, and you lean with too decided a bias to the Opposition to appreciate the sort of talent requisite for office. It is not the splendour of speculative ability that we seek, but a plodding industry that never tires at its task."

"True," said the earl, "I have been somewhat a truant in my public duty; but your lordship knows that, were things properly managed, the opinion of the few—and the wise are always the few—would ever predominate."

"I am not surprised that such should be the sentiment of a regular opponent to his Majesty's Government; but, my lord, as our political opinions can never coalesce, it is unnecessary to discuss such topics," replied the marquis.

The earl was tempted to rejoin, "Unless there be a change of Ministry;" but he suppressed the sarcasm, and said cheerfully, "Well, I commit him to your providence, my lord, and shall long exceedingly till I know the rich effects."

The Marquis of Avonside, who imagined that it was necessary for the safety of the State that he should be always at his post, soon after this conversation returned to London, and immediately on his arrival sent for our hero,—for his lordship held it as a maxim that expedition was the soul of business.

The person of Wylie was not altogether unknown to the marquis: he had seen him frequently at Lady Sandyford's parties ; but notwithstanding, he was a little startled when he saw so insignificant-looking a personage enter his library. After requesting him to take a seat, and when he had resumed his own chair at the writing-table, his lordship said, in the most condescending manner, "Both my Lord and Lady Sandyford have recommended you to me in the strongest manner, and Lord Riversdale also has expressed the most earnest solicitude that I should use my influence in your behalf. Desirous to gratify the wishes of such dear relations, and to manifest my own high sense of your prudence and zeal, I have sent for you this morning, with the view of inquiring in what manner my influence can be serviceable to your interests."

Andrew had some notion of the general character of his lordship, and this short speech enabled him to understand it thoroughly.

"I am greatly obligated," was his answer, "for such kindness; but I am no able to point out, at this present time, just to say how your

lordship's great power and efficacy might be serviceable."

"I can easily obtain for you a lucrative appointment abroad," said the marquis.

"That would be a great thing," replied Andrew; "but as I'm of a learned profession, I would fain go on with it, rather than gang abroad in a situation where I might not be able to give satisfaction, and might, in consequence, affront your lordship, and thereby lose that good opinion which is of mair value to me than gold."

"You are a very discreet young man," said the marquis, conciliated by the address with which this was said. "But in your profession I may have it in my power to assist you."

"There can be no doubt of that, my lord. Your lordship has it in your power to be the maker of a man, whenever it stands with your own pleasure," replied Andrew respectfully.

The marquis smiled in the most self-complacent manner, and with an accent of the greatest good-humour said, "Then I can assure you, Mr Wylie, that I was never more disposed to make any man than at this time; only, show me the way."

This was coming effectually to the point; and Andrew, aware of the strict honour with which his lordship redeemed his promises, said, "I'm sure, my lord, it is not to seek what I ought to say in the way of thankfulness for this great patronage; but for some sma' time yet, I cannot weel see how it may be rightly applied. Hows-

ever, if your lordship, when I find a fitting occasion to call for your powerful succour, would be pleased to gie me a bit lift in the way o' business, I'll be greatly your debtor."

"Not at all, Mr Wylie, not at all; and I must say that your modesty and prudence increase my desire to serve you," replied the marquis. "I will not, however, promise to make you my agent while my old friend Jack Docquet lives; but he is now above seventy, and of an apoplectic corpulency. However, you may rely upon me; and whenever my interest and influence can be of use, freely command them."

This interview our hero ever justly considered as one of the most important events in his life; for the marquis spoke of him not only as a prodigy of prudence, but possessed of the most promising talents in his profession, at the same time declaring his own determination to patronise a young man who seemed destined to confer so much lustre on his country.

CHAPTER LXVIII

Retrospections.

FOR a considerable time after the reunion of Lord and Lady Sandyford no particular incident occurred in the life of our hero. He continued to give the same plodding attention to his duties in the office of Mr Vellum; but it was remarked by Pierston, who was unacquainted with the important service he had rendered to his patron, that he seemed to feel more confidence in himself, and to move, as it were, with a freer spirit in the world—the unconscious influence of being sensible that he had obtained pledges of future prosperity.

With his grandmother he continued in the same dutiful correspondence, through the medium of Mr Tannyhill; but while he cheered her with the assurance of the sunshine that Heaven continued to shed upon his prospects, he wrote with a temperance and moderation that gave her no reason to suppose he had met with any extraordinary instance of good fortune.

With Mr and Mrs Ipsey he had continued from his arrival on the most intimate terms.

The retired solicitor not only relished humour, but was himself a humorist, and our hero had always a plate at his Sunday's dinner. The old gentleman was, indeed, his chief confidant, and by his experience enabled him to lay out the proceeds of his salary to the best advantage. On different occasions Andrew had insisted on repaying the money which was so generously advanced for his outfit, but Mr Ipsey as often refused it in the most decided manner. After the reconciliation of Lord and Lady Sandyford, however, partly with the view of indirectly discharging the debt, but chiefly to express the obligations that he felt himself under for the kindness he had received from Mr Ipsey, he presented his kinswoman with a handsome piece of plate, and from time to time continued to make her small presents of lace, which he had observed was almost the only article of finery that she admired: but ladies in general, whatever their stock and tastes may be, are particularly pleased with gifts of lace, especially Mecklenburg, Brussels, or Valenciennes, when it has been smuggled by the donors themselves.

By these means, his character, without being materially raised in the opinion of his early friends, was fully established as a young man of good sense, destined to acquire riches. His grandmother and the schoolmaster, on the receipt of every new letter, were the more and more persuaded of this, and that he would surpass all their brightest hopes. This persuasion, how-

ever, was not founded on anything he said, but upon the constancy of success which seemed to attend him, and also upon some imperfect report of the company in which he had been seen by Miss Mizy and Mary Cunningham during their visit to London.

With respect to Miss Cunningham, from the time she had returned Martha saw her but seldom; and when she inquired occasionally for Andrew, it was in a politer, but far less agreeable, manner than before her visit to the metropolis. The old woman remarked the difference in speaking of it to the master, but ascribed it to anxiety on her brother's account, who, after his removal to the Craiglands, grew every day worse and worse, insomuch that towards the end of the year his recovery was deemed hopeless.

Mr Tannyhill, who had ever taken the warmest interest in the destiny of his pupil, which his situation as amanuensis to Martha tended to foster, took a different view of the alteration in the deportment of Mary Cunningham. Being occasionally invited on the Sunday evenings to drink tea with Miss Mizy and the laird, he had acquired a more distinct knowledge of the sort of connections which Andrew had formed; for he had led the conversation often to the subject, and it occurred to him that our hero, presuming on his old familiarity with the young lady, had perhaps too eagerly obtruded himself on her notice, by which he had probably offended her pride, especially as he

observed that when her aunt spoke of his behaviour in terms of approbation, she sometimes expressed her astonishment at the means by which he had managed to get himself introduced into such fashionable society.

From an amiable solicitude to lessen any prejudice which he thought adverse to the good opinion that he himself entertained of his favourite, he took every opportunity of speaking in the kindest manner of the affections and principles of Andrew; and when Miss Cunningham once happened to say, a little petulantly, "I wonder, Mr Tannyhill, what makes you think that I care to hear about the oddity?" he mildly rebuked her by observing, "You canna, surely, Miss Mary, but take a pleasure to hear of the well-doing of a parish bairn? Ye were brought up in the innocence of childhood together; ye breathed the same pure halesome air, beeked[1] in the same sunshine, heard the same bonny birds in the spring, and gathered the same summer flowers: a' things which make up the ingredients of a charm that the kindly heart would never part with. It's no right of you, Miss Mary, to speak so lightly of Andrew; for it's my notion he'll be a credit to us a' yet. Ye see your aunt, Miss Mizy, who is a most discreet lady, thinks better of the poor laddie, and I'm sure she has had but sma' reason to do so; for ye canna but mind, when the captain, that's now

[1] *Beeked.* Basked.

bedrid, and Andrew were callants at my school, the dreadfu' damage they did to her mourning, on account of that queer pawkie pyet whilk was in the use and wont of stealing her thread-papers."

"Oh!" replied Mary laughingly, while a gentle blush tinged her neck and bosom and heightened the bloom of her face, "I'll never forget it, and the sad hand poor Wheelie made with his task of fifty psalms till I helped him."

"Then," said the master with guileless simplicity, "what for, Miss Mary, do ye so geck[1] at the honest lad's thriving?"

"I don't know why I should," was the answer, "for I'm sure it always gives me pleasure; but my aunt has taken it into her head that he's another Solomon, and is constantly plaguing me about paying him a visit when he's Lord Mayor of London. 'Tis surprising to hear what nonsense sensible people will sometimes talk. I dare say he's a very kind and dutiful grandson, and in time he may return among us, like the nabobs from India, with a heavy purse and a broken constitution, and nobody in the parish will be better pleased to see him than myself; but, really, Mr Tannyhill, I do not understand why you should fancy that I can have any particular interest in the matter."

"I'm very glad to hear you say so, Miss Mary," replied the simple advocate; "for I had a fear that maybe, when ye met him at that grand

[1] *Geck.* Deride.

ball in London, he had done something that wasna just suitable from Martha Docken's oye[1] to the Laird of Craiglands' dochter."

The blood instantaneously overspread the face of his fair auditor, and deepened her roses to the colour of the ruby; but, presently recovering herself, she laughed, and said, "Oh dear no! On the contrary, he behaved far better than I could have thought. I had no idea that the creature was possessed of half so much mother-wit. He was both better bred and far more sensible than any other gentleman we met there."

But although this conversation, on the whole, afforded unqualified delight to the innocent dominie, yet there was something in the behaviour of Miss Cunningham that he could not comprehend; and he set down her apparent dislike to hear of Andrew's prosperity to that jealousy of adventurous talent which about this time began to enter into competition with the entailed gentility of those feudal relics, the West Country lairds:[2] not reflecting that single women never think on such a subject, nor even married ones when they have many daughters to dispose of.

[1] *Oye.* Grandson.

[2] Compare *Annals of the Parish*, chap. xxix., and chap. xc. in this volume.

CHAPTER LXIX

Partnership.

IN the meantime Andrew was the frequent guest of Lord and Lady Sandyford, who continued to reside at Chastington Hall; and in his excursions from London he generally paid Mordaunt a visit, who always renewed his wish that he would allow him an opportunity to serve him, as if the unsatisfied feeling of gratitude was become uneasy.

"The time's coming," he would as often reply; "and whenever I'm of a legal capacity to enter into business on my own account, I'll then make bold to beg the help of your friendship."

The earl and countess made no professions. They took up his interests more earnestly; for, ascribing their mutual happiness entirely to his fearless and free integrity, they studied the means of promoting his fortune as a more worthy and delicate return than the sordid offerings of pecuniary generosity.

But a sudden event brought into play and action all the favourable dispositions of the friendships he had formed. Old Jack Docquet, solicitor

to the Marquis of Avonside, expired (as his lordship had anticipated) of apoplexy ; and, with that punctual respect to his promise which constituted one of the most honourable traits in that nobleman's character, our hero was informed by express of the occurrence, and that his lordship's manifold and complicated affairs awaited his acceptance.

The habit of drolling with his higher acquaintance made Andrew often indulge himself in the same humour with his master ; and accordingly, on going to chambers on the morning in which he received this important information, he asked permission to visit his friends at Chastington Hall and Mr Mordaunt, at the same time requesting the advance of a small sum to account for the expenses of his journey.

As Vellum was writing out the cheque Andrew said, "I'm thinking, sir, that maybe it would be as weel, providing you were agreeable, that we should gang into partnership thegither."

The solicitor paused as if he had been smitten with a sudden judgment, as Andrew himself described it, and said, "What did you say, Mr Wylie?"

"I was saying," resumed Andrew, "that maybe it might be as well if you would tak' me into partnership."

"Partnership!" exclaimed the solicitor. "Why, you know nothing of business. You have acquired neither the requisite knowledge of the forms nor the substantials of the law."

"I didna say anything about them. I only thought that, if you would tak' me in for a partner, some good might come out o't."

Mr Vellum remembered in what way Lord Sandyford had saddled him with seven hundred and fifty pounds a year, and did not much like this proposition on the eve of a visit to his lordship. He, however, replied, in a calm and reasonable manner, "In course of time, Wylie, you may perhaps have reason to expect an interest along with me; but at present you must be sensible that you are still too young."

"Mr Pitt," replied Andrew, "wasna muckle older than me when he was made Minister of Great Britain, France, and Ireland."

"You do not surely compare yourself with Mr Pitt?" exclaimed Vellum, petrified at the remark.

"Oh dear no!" answered Andrew: "I had nae sic thought. He was Minister of three kingdoms; but I'm only wanting a bit share or portion in your business. There's an unco difference between it and three kingdoms, Mr Vellum."

The solicitor did not well know what answer to make to this. He was chilled to think with what pertinacity Andrew adhered to his proposal, and, somewhat eagerly, said, "Pray, Mr Wylie, has anybody suggested this notion to you? I am surprised how it could be supposed you were qualified already to take a part as principal in my business."

"I'll be vera plain wi' you," replied Andrew;

"just as plain and as pleasant as ye are wi' me. Nobody said anything to me on the subject, nor did I ask the advice of anybody; but I thought ye were yoursel' by this time sensible o' the weight of my interest."

"I have had reason," retorted Vellum, in an acute tone, "to know that weight."

"I thought so," replied our hero coolly; "and I thought likewise you would consider't. I would therefore be vera glad if ye would gie me a short answer as to whether ye will be content with me as a partner or no."

"Some time hence, Mr Wylie, I think the question may be put with more propriety. At present you must be well aware that you are not ripe for what you propose."

"I'm no presuming to say that I am; but, Mr Vellum, a man wi' money in his purse can command talents and learning, though he hae neither himsel'. There are plenty of well-learned able young men, and some auld han's too, in our profession, whose help I can get wi' thankfulness—they being without friends."

This was a touch of policy beyond the utmost conceptions of Vellum; and he said, in an accent of evident alarm, "You seem to presume on the partiality which Lord Sandyford has shown you."

"No," replied our hero dryly. "But I do not see what that has to do with our present discourse—which was to know if you would take me into partnership."

"Truly, Mr Wylie," answered the solicitor, moderating his manner, "you could scarcely expect an immediate answer to such a proposition."

"I wasna expecting an immediate answer. Far be it frae me, Mr Vellum, to put you into ony disorder or agitation on the subject; for if I get a favourable waft o' your good-will, I can bide a wee for an answer as to the amount of the share that ye're willing to give me."

Vellum, while he bit his lips with vexation, could not refrain from smiling at this; and said, with his wonted worldly, off-hand good-humour, "Well, well, I see how it is, Wylie; we are to be partners, and I don't think we shall quarrel about the terms."

"I dinna think so either," replied Andrew; "and as an earnest that I wasna coming all as a cess upon you, a' wi the rake and no wi' the shool,[1] I hae some reason to think that I can wyse[2] you the business of Sir Thomas Beauchamp and Mr Mordaunt, the whilk will help to make the pot boil between us. And the Marquis of Avonside has this morning sent me word that old Mr Docquet, his solicitor, has departed this life, and that his lordship's concerns, which were in his hands, are welcome to my acceptance."

Vellum laughed, and said, "And so, with all this in store, you have been slyly feeling my pulse.

[1] *Cess . . . shool.* *Cess* is a levy: raked in, not *shooled* or shovelled out.

[2] *Wyse.* Entice to.

Upon my conscience, Wylie, if you are not the most unfathomable being I ever knew. However, to show you that I duly appreciate the importance of the clients that you are likely to bring to us, I will admit you at once to a half of our mutual business, and the partnership shall be dated from this day."

"A bargain be't," cried Andrew gaily; adding, "And ye may depend on't, Mr Vellum, that the horse that brings grist to the mill is as useful as the water that ca's the wheel. I'll no trouble you with ony interference in the professional parts of the business; but I'll ettle my best to gather wark for your head and hands."

In this way the footing of Andrew was established in the world; and Vellum, with his characteristic promptitude, then said, "A number of friends and clients are to dine with me to-day at Sandyford House, and you must be of the party, when I will announce the connection which has been formed, and which I doubt not will redound to our mutual satisfaction and advantage."

CHAPTER LXX

Economy.

In returning home to dress for dinner, our hero reflected that it would be no longer respectable in him to continue those parsimonious habits which he had hitherto maintained, and that although it was still prudent to adhere to an economical system, yet it was not fit he should continue to present to his old friends that appearance of penury of which he had not, without obvious reasons, been accused. Accordingly, he determined to sacrifice to the opinion of the world, and, aware of the character which he possessed among his acquaintances, he determined to surprise them.

In one of the obscure streets in the neighbourhood of Queen's Square, where he lodged in Vellum's private residence, he had noticed a bill in the window of a large house, which had evidently been the abode, at one time, of some eminent and opulent character; and in going to Sandyford House to dinner he walked to examine the neglected premises.

He found the mansion, without being exactly

old-fashioned, behind the present taste, but spacious in the apartments, and richly ornamented. It had, in fact, been erected and fitted up by an old bachelor of an eccentric disposition who had indulged his peculiar humour in the style and decorations. Much of the furniture was so adapted, in both form and place, to the rooms that it partook of the nature of fixtures, and, as everything was in excellent order, the house was ready for the immediate reception of a tenant.

Andrew was pleased with the general air of the whole, and amused himself with the surprise he would give to his friends by inviting them to such a place; for the terms, both on account of the situation, and the general singularity of the edifice, were very low, and he determined at once to take it. Accordingly, he went immediately to the house-agent and settled the business.

In his way to Sandyford House, he called at the confectioner's who supplied the parties of his fashionable friends, to secure for him a suitable housekeeper and butler.

"They are to be," he said, "the very best of their kind. The woman maun be used to a genteel economy, but to the style of the best families; and the man is to be a gawsy, middle-aged, staid, and orderly carle,[1] who has lived with bachelor gentlemen o' discretion and prudence. He'll need a bit laddie to help him; but that I'll let him choose for himsel'. Ye'll be

[1] *Gawsy carle.* Portly old fellow.

sure, however, that ye get me folk that can be trusted, and I'll pay them the same wage that is paid in the best houses; and ye'll lose nae time about this job, for I am to hae a party this day month at dinner, for the which you will mak' a' preparation. Ye'll see that everything is the vera best o' its kind. In short, Mr Comfit, as ye say in your advertising accounts of my Lady This's ball and my Lord That's dinner, we maun hae a' the delicacies o' the season. It's my first dinner, and I would be affrontit gin it wasna past common,—which it must be in both the rarity and the goodness. And I'll tell you another thing, Mr Comfit: the dainties of the first and second course ye'll serve up on the finest china, with a' the requisite appurtenances, in the best order—for we maun first please the eye and satisfy the mouth before we play ony pranks; but in the third course, and in the dessert, ye maun show your cunning, baith in the viands and the vessels. As for the eatables, I say nothing: let them only be the rarest and the best; but for the vessels, knives and forks, etcetera, ye'll go through all the curiosity and china shops, and pick out the queerest and drollest sort of plenishing that's possible to be had. Ye'll no buy't, however, for that would be needless—but hire it, let the cost be what it may."

These instructions were promised to be carefully fulfilled; and we need not add that orders

for luxuries, by those who are supposed able to pay for them, are never in London stinted in the supply.

No similar event in the higher sphere of the world of fashion had, for many years, excited so much speculation as the idea of our hero's dinner. The guests invited amounted to twenty-one, and the majority were persons of the first rank and consideration in the country, actuated, in general, by the curiosity of the thing. Some, however, were influenced by the persuasion that under Andrew's simplicity and plain exterior talents for business of a high order were concealed, and several were interested in the affair by their delight and relish of his curious humour. All agreed in one thing: that a dinner from Wylie must of itself be something very extraordinary; and that, in a street which none of their coachmen or servants had ever heard of, it could not fail to afford them much amusement, whatever the fare might be. A vast deal of talk was the consequence; and, upon comparing notes, it was soon discovered that the party had been selected with great sagacity, insomuch that interest began to be made for a place. But our hero was inexorable; none but his elderly and most distinguished friends and acquaintances were invited, and his answer to the younger sprigs of nobility and fashion, who were continually boring him for places at what they called his "benefit," was uniformly the same: "Stay till your betters be serv't."

The affair at last amounted to such importance that the ladies began to lay themselves out for invitations, and a solemn representation was made to him by three duchesses, four marchionesses, five countesses, six viscountesses, and seven baronesses, besides the daughters of all orders of the nobility, and ladyships of minor degree without number. But to them likewise his answer was, "Patience, patience! cry a' at aince, leddies, and see who will be first serv't." This, however, had no effect in pacifying them.

Whenever he made his appearance at any party, up came a flock of matrons and their goslings, flying, with their fans in the one hand and their trains in the other, to pester him for invitations to his party. Among others, the Dowager Lady Clackit was the most perilous and vexatious in her importunity; insomuch that one night at the Duchess of Dashingwell's assembly he took her ladyship aside, and complained to her in a most disconsolate tone about the plague he suffered on account of his dinner.

"Is't no a hard case, my leddy," said he, "that I should be driven to my wit's end by the women about this bit chack o' dinner? Everybody but you, my leddy, just wearies me out o' my senses. Noo, this is vera hard, my leddy; for ye ken I hae had for some time a notion o' gieing a ball and supper whereat ye're to do the honours o' the meeting. I wonder how it is that they winna be pacified with that expectation. But I'm

resolved, if they fash me ony mair, the deevil be licket of ball or supper they'll get frae me, or ony other civility, if I hear, after this night, another word frae them on this subject. Noo, as I consider you, my leddy, interested in this, ye'll no blame me if ye're a' disappointed; for what I would do, if the women would but behave themselves, would be something, my leddy, to be spoken o' when ye're dead and gone."

Her ladyship was won; and the whole females of the party were, in the course of a few minutes, quieted, and desisted from their importunity, under an assurance that Wylie was to give a most incomparable ball, and that Lady Clackit was to do the matronly honours on the occasion. Some thought that Andrew had not made a very good choice; but all agreed that, when it did take place, the thing would be exquisite.

While thus an underplot was working to effect, time ran on, and the day and hour of the dinner arrived. Carriage after carriage drove up to the darkened front of our hero's antique mansion; and the moment that each successive guest stepped into the hall he was smitten with a conviction that he had formed a false estimate of the feast. The hall, it is true, had an air of singularity in its appearance; but the footman who gave admittance was dressed in a remarkably handsome but plain livery, and the general effect of the first impression was strikingly respectable and genteel.

On ascending to the drawing-room, some little emotion of wonderment was excited by the style of the room. It was splendid, but strange. The furniture was in an odd taste, and the ornaments were curious; but the general effect was good, and every one felt that he was in no common place. Andrew received his guests with his wonted ease; but none of them was half so much surprised at both the house and the company as Mr Vellum.

The admiration of all, however, was the dinner-table. Nothing could exceed the elegance and, at the same time, the simplicity of the first and second course. The service was truly beautiful, the cookery was delicious, and the wines were incomparable. London had indeed been ransacked for them. The whole world could produce no better of their kinds; and a sensation of wonder and astonishment made the guests look at one another, utterly unable to divine by what enchantment such a palace and banquet had been raised.

At the third course, the mirthful knavery of their host manifested itself. Such a congregation of ancient and grotesque china had never been assembled on one board together; and peals of laughter broke forth as each new curiosity was set down.

"Ay," said our hero, enjoying their amusement, "ye ken I haena dishes enew o' ae sort to serve you a' through alike; so I thought that I would make

up, according to my ain taste, something just as fine and genteel as could well be, and ye see here such a show as I am sure the Prince of Wales himsel', wi' a' his fee-fa-fums, canna match."

But the third course was only the morning star to the sun of the dessert. The pagodas of India, and the temples of China and Japan, and the produce of all climates, seemed to have been laid under contribution. In a word, the house, the treat, the wines, and the master, were pronounced unparalleled, and the gusto which pervaded all was the most racy thing in the whole concern; and the description excited an inordinate expectation among the ladies respecting the ball and supper. It was agreed among them that it ought to be a fancy ball; and Lady Clackit was authorised to represent the wishes of the community of fashion on the subject.

"Me gie a fancy ball, Leddy Clackit!" was the exclamation. "Do you think I hae lost my judgment? What would the neighbours say of a fancy ball and sicklike masquerading in my sober and methodical house? No, no, my leddy —nae sic flagaries[1] wi' me. I just mean to gie a decent dance to fifteen lads and fifteen lasses —a very good number for a country dance;—and there's a blind fiddler in our neighbourhood that has promised to come for half-a-crown, bread and cheese, and a dram; and I'll gie you penny-pies, eggs, and strong ale, when ye're weary wi'

[1] *Flagaries.* Superfluities.

dancing to his springs. But a fancy ball! Na, na, my leddy; unless ye can fancy the ball like what I hae tald you of, the sorrow o' a ball shall be in my house."

"You cannot be in earnest!" cried her ladyship. "You could never expect me to take a part in such a hop of a thing as that?"

"Then, if ye winna do't, I assure you nae ball or supper shall be given by me; and so I leave you to settle't wi' your kimmers[1] and cronies the best manner you can."

"Mr Wylie, you have used me very ill," said her ladyship, walking away in a huff, to declaim against the shabby, avaricious wretch, as she called him.

But some of the more knowing matrons were not taken in by her report, especially his old friend the Duchess of Dashingwell, who went to him immediately, and proposed herself as the matron, Lady Clackit having resigned. In this our hero was fairly matched by the women, for he never had intended to give any entertainment at all; and the whole, from first to last, was but a stratagem to be released from their importunities. The offer of the Duchess of Dashingwell, however, was an honour of which he knew the full value, and he did not for a moment hesitate.

"Your grace," said he, "kens the conditions, and that my house is no used to the servitude of balls and routs: but if you will hae a gather-

[1] *Kimmers.* Companions, gossips.

ing in't, I'm sure it wouldna become me to refuse. But, my leddy duchess, I'll just hae the fiddler that frightened that weak woman, Leddy Clackit, and the penny-pies, the eggs, and the strong ale, —that's what ye'll get."

"Oh, it will be delightful!" exclaimed her grace; "it will be the most unique thing ever heard of. I wouldn't for all the balls and routs of the season lose such a treat. Do, pray, fix at once about it!"

"That I leave to your grace's convenience," said Andrew. "Since ye will hae sic daffin,[1] ye maun time't yoursel'. I leave a' the invitations to you—only, the number maun be limited to fifteen couple, in the first instance."

The duchess flew about the room, delighted with her commission, and every one was anxious to be placed on her list; so that when the ball did take place, it was quite as extraordinary of its kind as the dinner; for Andrew, on consenting to enlarge the number of the invitations, restricted the selection to the gayest and most beautiful of all her grace's acquaintances.

[1] *Daffin.* Idle jollity.

CHAPTER LXXI

A Friend in Need.

CHARLES PIERSTON, who had for some time been settled in business by his uncle on his own account, called one evening on our hero and begged the loan of a thousand pounds. Wylie was not surprised at the application, for various circumstances had come to his knowledge which gave him reason to suspect that the prosperity of Charles was deeply affected by some of those political convulsions which at that time deranged the commercial relations of the world.

"Charles," said Andrew, "I dinna refuse your request, but it's proper and fit that ye should enable me to ascertain if the thousand pounds can be of any real service; therefore gang and bring me your books, and when I hae ta'en a blink of their contents I'll gie you an answer; and I sincerely wish it may be in the shape of a cheque for the sum you want."

Pierston was not altogether perfectly satisfied with this reply, but it was so reasonable that he could not object to the proposal, and accordingly went for his books.

During his absence, Wylie sent for one of the ablest accountants, whom, by the time Charles returned, he had in the house. He did not apprise his friend of this circumstance; on the contrary, the moment he appeared with the books, he took them from him, and said, "Ye maun leave them with me till the morn, when ye'll come, and I'll gie them back, I hope, wi' a favourable answer."

Charles felt something like mortification at this strict and austere mode of proceeding; for he calculated on the familiarity of ancient friendship, and he did not conceive his situation to be at all such as that the application for a temporary loan should be treated so particularly. However, he suppressed the slight feeling of resentment which arose, as it were, in anticipation of a refusal, while he suffered the sensation of that chill and disagreeable experience of the true nature of the world which is commonly the usual foretaste of misfortune.

When he returned in the morning, his old friend received him with more than usual cordiality, and kept him for some time in general conversation. Pierston had discernment enough to perceive that this was but the prelude to a negative; and, after enduring the effort that Andrew was evidently making to prepare him for the decision he had obviously come to, he said abruptly, "But have you examined my books?"

Our hero did not immediately reply, but looked for some time as if at a loss for an answer.

"I see how it is," resumed Pierston; "you do not think it prudent to grant me the loan?"

"I would give you the money," replied Andrew, "if it could be of any service; but your affairs are widely scattered, and although all is clear and satisfactory, I am sure that, in the present state of the world, you cannot get the better of your difficulties. Charlie, let me gie you a word of counsel: strive no longer with your fortune. In a word, end your business, and go into the *Gazette* as a bankrupt."

Charles became pale, his lips quivered, and a momentary flash of indignation gleamed from his eyes.

"Dinna mistake me, Charlie; I am speaking as a friend. Your character as a man of business is unblemished and your integrity stands clear; but if ye struggle on, you will be reduced to expedients that will ruin both, and you must break at last, amidst a fearful outcry of deluded creditors."

Charles made no reply; taking up his books, he immediately retired, and Wylie made no attempt to appease the feelings with which he was evidently troubled. But as soon as Pierston had left the house he went directly to the Marquis of Avonside. "My lord," said he, "I'm come to ask a small favour of your lordship. A friend of mine has five thousand pounds to lend at common interest, and I have been thinking that, as your lordship will in a manner be obligated to take on something against the expenses of the ensuing

general election, this is an opportunity to get the money at an easy rate, the which, in my opinion, your lordship should not neglect."

The marquis bestowed liberal commendations on the forethought of his agent, and readily agreed to take the money. Some light and humorous conversation then followed, and after a reasonable time Andrew rose to go away. In moving, however, across the floor, he paused suddenly, and said, "My lord marquis, there's a sma' matter in which I would be greatly obliged to your lordship. Sometimes, among my friends, there are young lads to be provided for, and it would really be a thing of a convenience to me if your lordship could get a recommendation put down in the minister's books for a post under the Government at home or abroad, the same to stand at my disposal. I'm no particular as to what it may be—only I would like it was something good, and likely to be soon forthcoming."

The marquis smiled, and cheerfully promised, saying, "I have sometimes thought, Wylie, that you have not turned the interest of your friends so well to account as you might do; and therefore, as this is the first favour you have ever requested of me, I must try to do the best I can, especially as you have asked for no particular appointment."

"That's very kind of your lordship," replied Andrew; "and your liberal patronage shall not flow upon any unworthy object."

The same evening, our hero received a note from the marquis, informing him that the minister in the House of Lords had promised him the nomination to a secretaryship in India, which was to be soon vacated. Charles Pierston was immediately sent for.

"Weel, Charlie," said Andrew, as he entered the room, "have you reflected on what I said to you in the morning?"

Charles replied that he had, and that he was extremely distressed and perplexed.

"I'm wae for that, man," said Andrew; "but better ken the warst at aince. Think weel on what I have counselled, for I can now say that an end to your perplexities, earned with a clear character, is the very best thing that can happen."

But Charles was swayed by a thousand indefinable feelings, and vacillated between shame and resolution. Andrew, however, without giving him the slightest intimation of what had taken place between himself and the marquis, had the satisfaction to see, before they parted for the night, that a tendency towards his opinion had begun to take place in the mind of Pierston. He, in consequence, refrained from urging him further, leaving the bias to work out its own effect; and in the course of a few days after, he had the satisfaction to receive a note from Charles, informing him that, sensible it was in vain to struggle any longer, he submitted to what really appeared to be his inevitable fate.

The prudence of this step was soon recognised by the creditors of Pierston; and in the shortest possible course of law, as a testimony of their respect for his manliness and honesty, they granted him an unanimous discharge. Charles brought it to Andrew, in some hope that perhaps he would then be induced to lend him the sum he had formerly solicited, to assist him to begin the world anew; but after looking at the document carefully he said only, "Charlie, I'm very well pleased to see this; but I have a particular occasion to gang out just now, and ye maun excuse my leaving you."

The heart of Charles swelled within his bosom, and he turned aside, unable to speak, while his friend hastily quitted the room. There was perhaps some degree of cruelty in this proceeding: for our hero, having obtained the nomination to the Indian appointment, might have told him of that circumstance; but he recollected always the old proverb that many things happen between the cup and the lip, and did not feel himself justified to encourage any hope which might be frustrated. He, however, on leaving the house, went to the marquis, and did not quit his lordship until he had got the nomination and appointment of Charles confirmed. The urgency with which he had pursued this object struck his lordship, and he rallied Wylie, with all the wit of which he was master, on the supposed profit and advantage derived from the job.

"What your lordship says is very true," replied Andrew. "I'll no deny that it has been a good windfall; but the public, or I'm mista'en, will hae no reason to complain, for Mr Pierston is a man of both parts and principles. Indeed, had I no been fully persuaded of this, it would ne'er have entered my head to solicit the powerful help of your lordship's hand in his behalf."

We shall not attempt to describe what ensued when Wylie informed his old companion of his appointment, as the sequel will show the feelings with which Pierston ever afterwards cherished the remembrance of the obligation thus conferred.

CHAPTER LXXII

Patriotism.

THE Marquis of Avonside, soon after he had procured the appointment for Pierston, received a confidential communication from one of his ministerial friends, relative to the dissolution of Parliament, by which his lordship was induced to send immediately for our hero, as his solicitor, to consult him with respect to the management of the borough of Bidfort, in which his lordship's influence was expected to be keenly contested. The noble marquis was one of the most disinterested supporters of his majesty's servants, as long as they enjoyed the confidence of their royal master; and perhaps, correctly speaking, he could not therefore be considered as a party man. His public conduct being regulated by what might be called the hereditary politics of his family, he had not found it profitable; indeed, to do him justice, he did not regard personal aggrandisement as at all a legitimate object even of his courtly patriotism. On the contrary, his estates were much encumbered by the consequences of his endeavours to preserve that political importance which his

ancestors had always enjoyed in the state, and which was severely menaced by the rising influence of other more talented or wealthier families.

But not to meddle with such matters, which at present do not lie exactly in our way, our hero, on reaching the residence of the marquis, found his lordship alone; who, after a short preliminary conversation relative to the object in view, and the arrangements for a new mortgage to enable him to carry on the election, said, "Now I think of it, Wylie, why don't you get into the House? I would as soon give my influence in Bidfort to you as to any man I know. Not that I think you qualified to make any figure in debate; but there is a great deal of private and committee business in which you are eminently fitted to take an able and an effectual part. I wish you would think of this; and if you are disposed to close with the offer, you shall have my interest for less than any other candidate."

The proposition did not meet an unprepared mind. From the time that our hero found he had risen to his natural level in society, the ambition to become a member of Parliament had several times stirred in his fancy. He had actually formed the design of sounding his lordship on the subject; nevertheless, his characteristic prudence did not allow him to give a frank answer.

"I'm sure," said he, "that I'm greatly obliged to you, my lord, and what ye propose is a very

friendly turn; but it's far from my hand to take a part in the great council o' the nation;—no that I think there are not bits o' jobbies about the House, wherein a bodie like me might mess and mell[1] as weel as anither. But, my lord, ye know that your interest needs to be supported through thick and thin, and that I'm rather inclined to follow the politics o' my noble frien' the earl, your son-in-law, who is, as your lordship has lang complained, a dure[2] hand with the Whigs."

The marquis was a little perplexed with this answer. It was not a negative, nor was it an assent, but implied something like an overture towards negotiation. His lordship, however, without committing himself, replied, "Of course, Mr Wylie, I should expect that in all public measures you would divide with my ministerial friends; but I should never think of tying you up on questions of speculative policy, except on Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation. These are fixed points, and against these your vote, be whosoever minister, I would hold pledged."

"Anent them, my lord, ye need be under no apprehension; for it's no to be expectit, as a thing in the course o' nature, that, in the first place, I would part wi' the stool that supported me; and, in the second, my conscience will never consent that I should be art or part to bring in

[1] *Mess and mell.* Take a share.
[2] *Dure.* Inflexible.

the whore of Babylon among us, riding on the beast with seven heads and ten horns. But what would your lordship expect if it was proposed to the House to clip the wings o' that fat goose the Episcopalian establishment?"

"How!" cried his lordship in terror, "touch the Church, Mr Wylie? Are you in earnest? Why, that would be to pull down the state."

"I didna say anything about my touching the Church. No, gude forgie me, I'm no for meddling wi' ony sic slippery blades as the clergy. I but put the thing by way o' a hypothesis; for in this age of innovation and change it's no impossible that some o' the gabs[1] o' the House will agitate the question, and what I would like to know is, Whether, if the matter were to come to an issue, ye would expect me to vote for upholding the whole tot o' the establishment as it stands at present; or, if it were proposed to reduce the tithes, and give a portion of them to the state or the landlord, which your lordship would prefer?"

"Why," said the marquis, "I'm not apprehensive that any such question will come on. In the course of the present reign it would be hopeless; but, undoubtedly, were the attempt to be made, the landlord has the best right to the tithes."

"I had a notion that would be your lordship's opinion," replied Andrew. "But, my lord, as the tithes are the property o' the Church, would it no be more natural for the members o' Parliament,

[1] *Gabs.* Praters.

who, like me, have no land, to take a portion of the tithes to themselves, than to give them to the landlords?"

The marquis was puzzled, and could not see the drift of our hero's observations.

"Howsever," continued Andrew, "I think, wi' your lordship, that it's no a question very probable to be debated for some time yet; only, it was necessary that I should ascertain what was the bearing o' your lordship's mind on such concerns. And noo that I clearly understand your lordship's representatives are no to vote for reformations, nor for Catholic emancipation, and that, if the question of Church spoliation comes on, they are to vote for the behoof of the landlords, we may come to the point about the borough. What's the price your lordship would expect if I agree to come in for your lordship, tied neck and heel to your lordship's ministerial friends?"

The marquis winced a little at the plainness of this language, but he could not refrain from smiling. "Why," said he, "if you come in for one of my close boroughs, you shall have it for three thousand five hundred. I will give it to no one else for less than four thousand; and there is a recent Indian importation that will give me even more; but he is a talking fellow, and I like all my friends to work well and say nothing."

"Really, that's a great temptation, my lord,

and I think we might come to a conclusion if your lordship would just gang a wee thought ajee,[1] to let my conscience hae room to slip cannily out and in when it's a straight case."

"Upon that head," replied the marquis, "we shall not differ, I dare say. You are a sensible man, and I would trust as much to your discretion in politics as to any gentleman's that I happen to know; but the Government must be supported."

"My Lord Avonside," said our hero with great seriousness of manner, "My Lord Avonside, I trust and hope that no man can presume to suspect that I would not support the Government?"

"I beg your pardon, Mr Wylie," replied his lordship; "I never called in question the soundness of your principles, and I think the proposition which I have made to bring you into Parliament is a proof of the respect in which I hold them."

"I am sure your lordship has no reason to think otherwise of my politics than as those of a man endeavouring throughout life to act an honest part; and, therefore, I am only grieved, wishing, as I do, to avail myself of your lordship's kind offer, that you should think of requiring from me any pledge or promise as to the way I shall vote; for that's a vera great impediment to my accepting the favour your lordship wishes to do me."

[1] *Ajee.* Aside, off the rigid lines.

"To be plain with you, Wylie, I do not require anything more from you than from those other gentlemen whom I send into Parliament. It is a necessary preliminary that the understanding on which I lend them my interest should be clear and explicit."

"Nae dout of that; the money should be regularly paid, and the nature o' the bargain perfectly understood. But that your lordship may not hae cause to be chided about any change in your system," replied Andrew dryly, "I'll tell you what I'll do. Ye know what my principles are, my lord; and, out of a friendship which I canna express my pride o', ye would send me into Parliament for five hundred pounds less than ony ither body—fast bound to your lordship's ministerial friends in a' debates. Noo, my lord, if ye'll consent to let me gang in free, I'll stand the contest in Bidfort at my own expense, whate'er the cost may be, the which will be both honourable to your lordship and me."

"You are a strange mortal," said his lordship laughing, "and I cannot but agree to your proposal. I hope, nevertheless, that you will not disappoint my confidence in your ministerial principles."

"I trust your lordship's ministerial friends will no gie me ony cause to mak your lordship rue the bargain."

Such were the preliminaries that led to our hero's return to Parliament. But there were

certain circumstances connected with his election too important to be omitted; especially as Minerva, in the shape of the old gipsy woman, facilitated his return with more effect, perhaps, than some of the more consequential and ostensible agents.

CHAPTER LXXIII

An Election.

SOON after Andrew had publicly announced his intention to stand for Bidfort, the grateful gipsies made their appearance before his house, and the old woman claimed admission.

"Weel, lucky," said our hero, as the footman showed her in, "whar are ye come from, and what's your will wi' me noo?"

"I have come to thank you again, and to serve you, for the kindness you have done to me and mine," replied the gipsy respectfully.

"Na, na, honest woman, ye canna bide here. I hae nae need of your servitude; I hae ouer mony in the house already," was the answer.

At which the old woman smiled, and said, "I come not, sir, to ask to share your fee or your fire; but to offer what skill I have to help your fortunes," and she looked at him some time with a queer and sly expression of curiosity; and then, seating herself unbidden in a chair opposite to where he was sitting, said, "You have hests in hand that I may further. Try my art. Seek you to stand in presence of the king? Would you

thrive in some fair lady's love? There are paths through the thicket that the gipsies know. Trust my guidance."

When the old woman had made this tender of her services, she sat for some time silent; and Wylie, meditating for two or three minutes on what she had said, then addressed her to the following effect: "I'll tell you what, guidwife: ye maunna try to cast your glamour ouer me. Ye have heard that I'm a candidate for Bidfort, so none o' your slights to beguile me with false hopes."

The old woman made no reply for some time to this; but sat in evident cogitation, and once or twice lifted the forefinger of her left hand suddenly to her lips, as if actuated by some quick internal impulse. She then raised herself erectly, as if fully prepared for the disclosure of some important result of her meditations.

"We know," said she, "how to bend the mind to love, and to unroot the weed of hate, and plant the rose of kindness in its stead. By the same art we'll work for you; and, tide whatever may betide, you'll find in the end that we can do you service. What's your electioneering colour to be?"

"Orange and true blue, to be sure: the Protestant ascendancy and the Hanoverian succession."

The old woman immediately rose, and, without saying a word, left the room. Before our hero

could recover his surprise, she was out at the street-door. The servants, who observed her hurry away, ran up to see that she had stolen nothing, and were some time in answering their master's bell, who rung to order her some refreshment.

The rest of the gipsies, who were lingering for their ancestress in the neighbouring streets, as soon as she made her appearance rallied around her, and soon after they at once set off for Bidfort.

At the entrance of the town, in a lone country lane leading to the common, they pitched their camp under a hedge; and while the men travelled the borough — the grandfather with his wheel to sharpen knives and razors, and his son with audible proposals to make horn-spoons—the old woman went from house to house to see if the inmates had any old china to clasp or rush-bottomed chairs to mend. The young woman begged with her infant; and the boy and urchin, with a basket filled with pedlar trumpery, plied about the market-place. This basket they had purchased on their way from London; and the principal articles which it contained consisted of small knots of orange and blue riband, and stay-laces made of twisted tapes of the same colours. Upon this device the grateful gipsies had expended a considerable part of the money which had been given them on the day of trial and they had till this time carefully preserved.

The gipsy boys, with great archness and merry roguery, so recommended their orange and true-blue love-knots and trinkets to the females and children, and sold them so temptingly cheap, that they were soon disposed of. Whenever their grandmother saw any of them in a house, she assumed her mystical looks, and said, "Orange betokens gold, and blue a true heart; the blessing of both be upon you."

For two or three days, in this manner they seemed to be plying their wonted vocations; and when an opportunity presented itself, each of the party recommended the other as a skilful fortune-teller. The preference, however, was always given to the age and experience of the ancestress, who, to all her customers, predicted great riches, and honour, and happy days, from "a little man from out the north, with smooth round cheeks and small eyes, clothed in orange and blue." The consequence of which was that every maiden looked northward in her dreams for a lover of this description, and the imagination of every one in the town was unconsciously tinctured with an affection for ideas of orange and blue.

At last, the predetermined dissolution of Parliament, after all the friends of the ministers had got the start of their adversaries, was disclosed to the public. The highways resounded with chariots and horsemen, and the public-houses in every borough became the humming hives of patriotism, to the immediate benefit of the excise,

which is perhaps the only part of the state that derives any immediate advantage from a general election.

Our hero and his friends having the ministerial advantage of starting before the patriotic nabob who opposed him, entered the borough in a barouche and four, all superbly decorated with large knots of orange and blue, and he required no herald to proclaim him. The gipsy's prediction had already disclosed him in vision; every eye at once recognised him, and he was received with universal acclamations, in which something even like a sentiment of superstitious reverence was mingled, insomuch that, when the nabob arrived, the whole town was like a bed of summer flowers, all orange and blue, and "the little man from out the north" was, although on the ministerial interest, so decidedly the popular favourite that his rival at once gave up the contest and retired from the field.

The gipsies, immediately after the new member had been chaired, presented themselves at his inn; and the old woman, with triumph and exultation, explained to him, in her wild way, the metaphysical aid which she had given to him in the election.

CHAPTER LXXIV

A Royal Residence.

OUR hero was perfectly aware that by his political connection with the Marquis of Avonside it would be necessary for him to appear early at court; indeed, the marquis, immediately on his return to Parliament, intimated as much, and that he would himself introduce him to the king.

Curiosity held a very subordinate station in the mind of Wylie, and it so happened that it had never prompted him to seek a sight of majesty. Though moving in the higher circles of fashionable life, it could not be said that he had even acquired any knowledge of the private and personal character of George the Third. The retirement of the royal family to Windsor had, indeed, rendered the king, in some degree, a stranger to his people; and, except on public occasions, levees, and drawing-rooms, his majesty was rarely seen by them, save on the Sunday evenings on the terrace of the castle.

Experience had taught Wylie that some previous acquaintance with the peculiarities and character-

istics of persons whom he had occasion to know was of great consequence to a successful issue of whatever he might have to do with them; and an introduction at court, so generally considered merely as a ceremonial, was to him an event to which he rightly attached much importance. He had been raised to that rank in life which made it, in some degree, indispensable; and it was not now beyond the range of ordinary probabilities that he might one day be brought into actual intercourse with his sovereign. It was, therefore, in his opinion, requisite that he should be able so to conduct himself at the first interview as not to leave any awkward or unfavourable impression. But to accomplish this required equal address and prudence, and it was a matter too delicate even for the counsel of friendship; for its object and purpose could not be disclosed without divulging some of those nebulous and anticipating guesses with respect to the chances of the future—those reveries of ambition—, which are seldom of a form so definite as to bear discussion. The Earl of Sandyford was the only one of his friends on whose judgment, in a matter of this sort, he would have placed any reliance; but although he justly admired his lordship's acute perception and delicacy of tact, he yet so dreaded his raillery that he was deterred from consulting him. And therefore, after weighing the subject well in his own mind, he resolved to go secretly to Windsor, and gather on the spot

as much information as possible about the habits, the manners, and true character of the king.

Accordingly, at the hour when the Windsor afternoon coach usually leaves the White Horse Cellar in Piccadilly, he was there, and took his place in a corner, shrinking from observation lest any friend should accidentally pass and question him respecting his excursion — a thing, by the way, that has happily rather gone out of fashion. Only country friends or Edinburgh advocates in town on appeal cases ever think of either asking or wondering what their acquaintance can be doing in stage-coaches.

In this journey our senator met with no adventure, although three Eton boys that were already playing at swells on the outside once or twice attempted to quiz him. He was, however, their match, and by the end of the journey they were become jocose and familiar acquaintance. He learned from them that the Castle Tavern was one of the best inns in Windsor; and one of the boys said "that, if he had no particular objection, they would call on him next day, and help him to ascertain what sort of wine was in the cellar."

"I can hae no objection," replied he slyly, "to receive any civility at your hands; and if ye're disposed to treat me to a bottle o' the best o't, I'll e'en make an endeavour to do justice to your kindness."

And with this they parted. The cubs were

left at their dame's door, where their fags were in obsequious attendance to receive their great-coats, and to do their hests with an obedience as implicit as that with which Ariel served Prospero, while our hero, driven over the bridge and up the hill, was set down at the Castle Tavern.

After taking tea in the coffee-room, which he did expressly for the purpose of asking questions of the waiter relative to the localities, he went to inspect the environs of the royal residence, and to see with what sort of external parade the actual abode of royalty was invested. His ideas on this subject were either not very clear, or very erroneous; for he was chilled, we might almost say awed, by the monastic silence which lingered in the wards and courts, except where the footfalls of the sentinels were heard, as the soldiers—themselves sympathising with the presiding genius of the place—performed their brief and narrow circuits before the different entrances, without exchanging a sentence; or where two or three of the small band of stone-cutters, employed in repairing the dilapidations of the towers and cornices, were heard chipping at their tasks in equal solemnity. He had expected to see steeds prancing and colours flying, and to hear drums beating and trumpets sounding amidst the flourish, bustle, and pageantry which he had supposed essential to the palace and court of an old and mighty monarchy. But an extreme sim-

plicity, dignified only by the circumstances of antiquity with which it was associated, everywhere prevailed. The broad and gorgeous folds of the royal standard on the round tower, as it pompously and slowly floated on the summer breeze to the setting sun, was the only suitable ensign of present sovereignty that met his view.

It was too late in the evening then to see the apartments, but he resolved to do so early in the morning,—not, however, with the slightest intention either of looking at the works of art with which they are adorned, or of listening to the traditionary stories of the servants appointed to show them. His object was to address himself to some one of the domestics, in the course of passing through the different halls and chambers, and so to lead into a conversation that might enable him to extract some authentic information respecting the real object of his visit. His inquiries that night were, therefore, chiefly regarding the times and modes of obtaining admission into the apartments, and when, where, and how he could see the royal family to most advantage.

His walk round the castle, and his inquiries of the persons he incidentally met with, filled up his time till it was dark, and he had no Shakspearian recollections to allure him into the park when the moon rose. On the contrary, a most prosaic belief that, if he continued lingering there much beyond candle-lighting time, he might meet with nocturnal questioners more substantial than fairies,

and quite as mischievous as those who played such pranks on Sir John Falstaff, induced him to retire early to the inn, by which he lost the beautiful and romantic effect of the view of the castle by moonlight—a view which every one who has the slightest taste for the picturesque ought neither to go abroad nor to die without seeing.

CHAPTER LXXV

Windsor Park.

By sunrise on the Sunday morning, Wylie was brushing the early dew in the little park, to taste the freshness of the morning gale, or, as he himself better expressed it, to take a snuff of caller air on the brow of the hill. But healthful exercise was not his only reason for being so soon abroad. It occurred to him in the watches of the night that, as his majesty was an early riser, the household too would of course be stirring with the cock, and that some of them might be more readily met with at that time than later in the morning. Accordingly, he kept a sharp look-out on all sides as he strolled through the park; but he saw only a solitary laundress, with a basket of linen on her head, going to the town, and three or four lumpish country boys that came whistling along the footpath from Datchet, in their clod shoes, with white cotton stockings, and the knees of their new velveteen breeches shown in front beneath clean smock-frocks, the tails of which, behind, were tucked up to show their Sunday coats.

Somewhat disappointed, but thinking he was still too early for the inmates of a palace, he prolonged his walk towards the meadows; and in stepping over a stile he saw, close before him, a stout and tall elderly man, in a plain blue coat, with scarlet cuffs and collar, which at first he took for a livery. There was something, however, in the air of the wearer which convinced him that he could not be a servant; and an ivory-headed cane, virled with gold, which he carried in a sort of negligent poking manner, led him to conclude that he was either an old officer, or one of the poor Knights of Windsor,—for he had added to his learning, in the course of the preceding evening, a knowledge of the existence of this appendage to the noble order of the Garter. "This," said the embryo courtier to himself, "is just the very thing that I hae been seeking. I'll mak' up to this decent carle; for nae dout he's weel acquaint with a' about the king," and he stepped alertly forward. But before he had advanced many paces, the old gentleman turned round, and seeing a stranger, stopped; and looking at him for two or three seconds, said to himself, loudly enough, however, to be heard, "Strange man—don't know him—don't know him;" and then he paused till our hero had come up.

"Gude-day, sir," said Wylie as he approached; "ye're early a-fit on the Sabbath morning; but I'm thinking his majesty, honest man, sets you a' here an example of sobriety and early rising."

"Scotchman, eh?" said the old gentleman; "fine morning, fine morning, sir—weather warmer here than with you? What part of Scotland do you come from? How do you like Windsor? Come to see the king, eh?" and loudly he made the echoes ring with his laughter.

The senator was a little at a loss which question to answer first; but, delighted with the hearty freedom of the salutation, jocularly said, "It's no easy to answer so many questions all at once; but if ye'll no object to the method, I would say that ye guess right, sir, and that I come from the shire of Ayr."

"Ah! shire of Ayr!—a fine country that—good farming there—No smuggling now among you, eh?—No excisemen shooting lords now?[1]—Bad game, bad game. Poor Lord Eglinton had a true taste for agriculture; the county, I have heard, owes him much.—Still improving?—Nothing like it.—The war needs men—Corn is our dragon's teeth—Potatoes do as well in Ireland, eh?"

The humour of this sally tickled our hero as well as the author of it, and they both laughed themselves into greater intimacy.

"Well, but, sir," said Andrew, "as I'm only a stranger here, I would like to ask you a question or two about the king, just as to what sort of a man he really is, for we can place no sort of

[1] A reference to the killing of the Earl of Eglinton by Mungo Campbell, an excise officer. See *Annals of the Parish*, chapter xxii., and *note*.

dependence on newspapers or history books in matters anent rulers and men of government."

"What! like Sir Robert Walpole—not believe history?—Scotchmen very cautious." But the old gentleman added, in a graver accent, "The king is not so good as some say to him he is; nor is he so bad as others say of him. But I know that he has conscientiously endeavoured to do his duty, and the best men can do no more, be their trusts high or low."

"That, I believe, we a' in general think: even the blacknebs[1] never dispute his honesty, though they undervalue his talents. But what I wish to know and understand is no wi' regard to his kingly faculties, but as to his familiar ways and behaviour,—the things in which he is like the generality of the world."

"Ha!" said the stranger briskly, relapsing into his wonted freedom, "very particular—very particular, indeed. What reason, friend, have you, to be so particular?—Must have some—People never so without reason."

"Surely, sir, it's a very natural curiosity for a subject to inquire what sort of a man the sovereign is, whom he has sworn to honour and obey, and to bear true allegiance with hand and heart."

"True, true, true!" exclaimed the old gentleman—"Just remark—Come on business to England?—What business?"

[1] *Blacknebs.* A name given to those who held Radical doctrines.

"My chief business, in truth, sir, at present here, is to see and learn something about the king. I have no other turn[1] in hand at this time."

"Turn, turn!" cried the stranger, perplexed—"What turn?—Would place the king on your lathe, eh?"

Our hero did not well know what to make of his quick and versatile companion; and, while the old gentleman was laughing at the jocular turn which he had himself given to the Scotticism, he said, "I'm thinking, friend, ye're commanded no to speak with strangers anent his majesty's conduct; for ye blink the question, as they say in Parliament."

"Parliament!—Been there?—How do you like it?—Much cry and little wool among them, eh?"

"Ye say Gude's truth, sir; and I wish they would make their speeches as short and pithy as the king's. I'm told his majesty has a very gracious and pleasant delivery," replied our hero pawkily; and the stranger, not heeding his drift, said with simplicity—

"It was so thought when he was young; but he is now an old man, and not what I have known him."

"I suppose," replied our hero, "that you have been long in his service?"

"Yes, I am one of his oldest servants. Ever since I could help myself," was the answer, with a sly smile, "I may say I have been his servant."

[1] *Turn.* Piece of work.

"And I dinna dout," replied the senator, "that you have had an easy post."

"I have certainly obeyed his will," cried the stranger in a lively, laughing tone; but, changing into a graver, he added, "But what may be my reward, at least in this world, it is for you and others to judge."

"I'm mista'en, then, if it shouldna be liberal," replied Andrew, "for ye seem a man of discretion, and, doubtless, merit the post ye have so long possessed. Maybe some day in Parliament I may call this conversation to mind for your behoof. The king canna gang far wrang sae lang as he keeps counsel with such douce and prudent-like men, even though ye hae a bit flight of the fancy. What's your name?"

The old gentleman looked sharply; but in a moment his countenance resumed its wonted open cheerfulness, and he said, "So you are in Parliament, eh?—I have a seat there, too—Don't often go, however—Perhaps may see you there—Good-bye, good-bye."

"Ye'll excuse my freedom, sir," said Andrew, somewhat rebuked by the air and manner in which his new acquaintance separated from him; "but if you are not better engaged, I would be glad if we could breakfast together."

"Can't, can't," cried the old gentleman shortly, as he walked away; but turning half round, after he had walked two or three paces, he added, "Obliged to breakfast with the king—he won't

without me;" and a loud and mirthful laugh gave notice to all the surrounding echoes that a light and pleased spirit claimed their blithest responses.

There was not much in this conversation that satisfied our hero, who perceived that it was no easy matter to gain the sort of knowledge which he had come on purpose to procure; and in the irksome humour which this reflection produced he consumed the morning, loitering in the park and about the castle till his usual breakfast hour, when he returned to the inn.

CHAPTER LXXVI

A Levee.

DURING breakfast in the coffee-room, Andrew learned from some of the other strangers, who were similarly employed, that the best opportunity of seeing the royal family was when they went and came from church; for it was not always certain that they would walk on the terrace in the evening.

"But," said he, "how am I to know the king? For I dinna suppose that his arms are like twa wild beasts, the lion and the unicorn. However, I'll avail myself of your counselling, and tak' my stance, as ye advise, at the royal entrance to St George's Chapel."

Accordingly, at the proper time he was at the place; but the moment that the carriage with their majesties drew up, he saw the old gentleman whom he had met in the park alone with the queen. His heart sank within him at the sight, and he fled abashed and confounded; for he discovered that it was the king himself, and he shrunk with alarm at the liberties he had taken.

The terrors of this idea, however, abated as he returned to London; and when he recalled to recollection all that had passed, he was satisfied his majesty was not likely to be displeased with him. By the time he reached home, he could, indeed, scarcely refrain from smiling at the adventure, when he thought how completely he had succeeded in the object of his excursion, at the very time when he was despairing of any success.

As the levee was to be held at St James's in the course of the week, on the following morning the marquis called to remind him that he was to be presented.

Andrew made something like an attempt to decline this honour, in the hope that, by postponing it to a distant day, his majesty might in the interim forget him, saying, "I dout, my lord marquis, it winna be in my power to go to court that day. I have a great fike[1] o' matters in hand, concerning causes that are to be tried at the next term, and really I would fain postpone it for a season."

"That cannot be," replied his lordship seriously. "It is expected that all my parliamentary friends should not only show themselves at court, but be regular in their attendance."

"I hope, my lord, that your lordship doesna consider this indispensable; for ye know a professional man cannot command his time, if he

[1] *Fike.* Perplexity.

would serve his clients with that fidelity which, I hope, your lordship and all mine have ever found I have tried to the best of my ability to do."

"But the public also must be served, and men in public situations must consider that. I therefore expect that you will be ready to go with me to St James's," replied the marquis.

"If your lordship makes a point o't, of consequence I maun yield. But, really, I did not think that there was any great serving o' the public by melting in a crowd at a levee."

"Mr Wylie," said the marquis gravely, "I thought you had a more correct notion of these sort of things. In what way can the public interests be more effectually promoted than by a regular and dutiful attendance on the monarch? Does it not inspire the people with that awe and veneration which is due from them to the first person in the state? In these times, when the Jacobin principles of anarchy are so widely disseminated, it requires the most strenuous efforts, on the part of all men who have a stake in the country, to uphold the constitution in its original purity of king, lords, and commons. For my part, were it not for a most devout persuasion of the utility of carrying my homage to the foot of the throne, I would never breathe the air of the court, for I have no natural taste for it. But, Mr Wylie, when I reflect on the distinguished part that my family have always taken in public affairs —in no instance, from the earliest periods, have

any of the Spangles been found deficient in their attachment to the monarchy, having uniformly for ages, through many changes, revolutions, and transfers of the dynasty, been found by the side of their sovereign—a systematic line of policy which has secured them at all times, even in the rudest and most turbulent, from the vicissitudes that have attended the more versatile members of the baronage."

"I am very sensible of the eminent part that your lordship, like your forefathers of great renown, has played in politics; and no one can be more impressed than I with the honour of being taken by the hand and led into the presence by a nobleman of your lordship's courtesy," replied Andrew; "but my objection was not to the action, but only to the time, having, as I said, a power of important causes in hand, coming on at the approaching term."

"The introduction will not occupy more than two or three hours," replied the marquis; "and when you have been presented, you may go as often after as you please; for his majesty possesses the extraordinary faculty of retaining the most perfect recollection of everybody that he has once seen."

"Ah!" exclaimed our hero.

"My dear friend," said the marquis soothingly, "I hope it is not a twinge of the gout?" And his lordship immediately mentioned a medicine which he had often himself taken with the most beneficial effects.

To this kindly sympathy, (leaving his lordship to imagine, however, that the pang which occasioned the interjection of anguish might have sprung from the gout), Andrew made the best answer he could; and the marquis went away with an understanding that the new member was to accompany him to the next levee.

When the day arrived, our hero, for the first time in his life, was irritable and fretful. His new court suit of dark brown, in his opinion neither fitted, nor was of a proper sobriety of appearance. "The spurtle," as he peevishly called the sword, he thought would have hung more commodiously at the right than the left side. Everything, in a word, teased him; and he banned the marquis for his perjinketies more than fifty times before he was equipped.

He delayed going to his lordship as long as possible, in order to allow the crowd time to fill the rooms before they could reach the palace; his intention being to hasten past the king in the throng, and so to avoid any particular observation. The marquis, when he arrived, was almost as much out of humour as himself, declaring that he had never been so late of going to the levee before.

On reaching the palace, Andrew kept in the wake of his lordship from the moment that they ascended the great staircase. To his short figure he trusted much; also something to his nimbleness when he should approach the king. And indeed he so managed that by lowly crooking his

knee at the presentation, and cowering down his head, averting his face at the same time, he had almost escaped the quick eye of royalty; but in the very moment when he was endeavouring to slink in behind the puckered form of a corpulent Church dignitary, he was caught in the fact, and instantly recognised by the king.

"Ha! ha!" cried his majesty; "fine morning, shire of Ayr! Come to see the king, eh? Come to see the king?"

Our hero, seeing there was no retreating, instantly mustered courage; and, calculating on his knowledge of the king's familiar humour, said, "Ah! 'twas a soople trick o' your majesty to delve a' out o' me, and never to give me an inkling of who I was speaking to."

The Marquis of Avonside was petrified, and stood aghast; while the king, laughing heartily, amused by the recollection of his own address, and pleased with the compliment which Andrew had so dexterously applied, continued speaking, —"Could not breakfast with you that morning, eh! But one good turn deserves another. What turn in hand now?" and in saying these words, his majesty briskly addressed himself to a northern nobleman, then high in his confidence and favour, and said, "Your countryman, my lord—'deevilish cunning,' as Sir Archy says; but an honest man—honest man—noblest work of God!"

Andrew availed himself of this ellipsis in his

majesty's discourse to hasten on, while some other person, to whom also the king had something jocular to say, appeared in sight, and drew off the royal attention from the new courtier.

The marquis was most seriously indignant when he afterwards rejoined our hero in their way to his lordship's carriage, assuring him that he had run the greatest possible risk of meeting a most ungracious reception. But Lord Sandyford, when informed of the adventure, declared that he should not be surprised if our hero were to rival his famous countryman in the royal favour. Nor was this opinion improbable; for immediately after the next drawing-room, where he was again most cordially recognised by the king, he received an invitation to one of the queen's parties at Buckingham House, at which his majesty requested him to come down to Windsor.

But history, when she records the cause which prevented our hero from being able to avail himself of the royal condescension, will change her smiles at the innocent foibles and artless jocularity of George the Third; and, with a generous eloquence, rising into all her dignity, will describe the constancy of his virtues, the true English simplicity of his character, the fortitude of his public principles, and the purity of his private worth.

CHAPTER LXXVII

The Spirit of Improvement.

NEITHER the east nor the west of Scotland affords the best market for the disposal of beautiful young ladies with large fortunes. We have even some doubts whether those of the south or the north be any better. Certain it is that although Mary Cunningham was, in all human probability, one of the finest and fairest of the "Ayrshire lasses," and surpassed by few in the prospects of fortune, she continued, during the regular advancement of our hero, still to bloom unplucked upon the parent spray. She had, doubtless, a due portion of the homage of tender glances and of sordid proposals; but in the sequestered bower to which she was confined by the mingled spell of her father's indolence and her aunt's pride and prudence, no acceptable youth had obtained a proper clue to conduct him to her presence or affections. For, saving at the annual papingo ball at Kilwinning, she was rarely seen beyond the boundaries of the Craiglands. One season, indeed, after her return from Edinburgh, and when the renewal of a lease of one

of the farms had brought a considerable augmentation to her father's income, her aunt had influence enough to induce the laird to treat them with the pleasures of the Ayr races, where Mary was universally admired, especially by the dashing officers of Lord Darlington's cavalry, at that time encamped in the neighbourhood, who, like military men in general, thought as much of a rich heiress as of a great beauty. But the circumspect Miss Mizy had a well-founded apprehension of the occasional demonstrations of the military, and always drew her niece as far as possible from the scene of danger. In truth, Mary herself did not seem to be particularly interested by the accomplishments or understanding of any of those Yorkshire heroes of the unblemished sabre. But this was not to be wondered at when we consider that those characteristics of intellectual superiority which have enabled the possessors to perform such miracles both abroad and at home,—we mean moustaches—had not then been revived in the British army.

The jaunt to Ayr was in consequence productive of no event; and Mary, after enjoying the social sunshine and gaieties of the race-week, was conducted back to the dull monotony of that monastic seclusion which she was fated to lead at the Craiglands.

A few of the county bachelors now and then called, and sometimes looked as if they could woo; but they were all either too well-stricken

in years, or cast in too clumsy a mould, without any redeeming grace of mind, to gain on the affections of a spirited and elegant girl who was not entirely unconscious of her charms.

We have been particular thus in describing the situation of Miss Cunningham, because we have some reason to suspect that her case is not a solitary one; and also because it was necessary to explain how Fate worked, in the meantime, to keep the possessor of so much beauty, and with such affluence in reversion, almost neglected and unknown, while she was performing such prodigies to increase the fortune and augment the personal consideration of her lover.

But although Mary was thus destined to bloom like a rose in a conservatory, her days neither passed in indolence nor without enjoyment. Her education at Edinburgh had been skilfully conducted; and during her short visit to London, she had obtained a view of the world from which her imagination easily enabled her to form a distinct and clear conception of its general outlines and bearings. Her taste, in consequence, found employment in superintending the restoration of the pleasure grounds of the Craiglands; and her address an object in obtaining from the narrow ideas of her father (with respect to the importance of such things) the requisite funds to defray the expense. In this business she became insensibly and unconsciously a blessing to the village of Stoneyholm; for the old men found

easier occupation in trimming the walks and lawns than in hedging and ditching and the statute labour of the highways. She lightened their tasks; and it is only by so doing that the rich can wisely assist the poor; for toil is their inheritance, and all that the well-regulated spirits among them ever covet is employment suitable to their strength.

It was thus, under the auspices of Miss Cunningham, that the genial influence of that improving genius, with which the whole kingdom was at the time animated, took effect in the native village of our hero; and he was not long uninformed of the change. For the master, regularly at the bottom of the letters which he wrote to him for his grandmother, mentioned from himself whatever occurred at Stoneyholm; and the taste and benevolence of Mary were the subjects which, unaware of their interest, he seemed most to delight in celebrating. "It is," said the amiable Tannyhill in one of those double epistles, "a wonder and pleasure to behold the beautifulness that's kything[1] around the place; where Miss Mary, after a great work, has got the laird, not only to whitewash the walls of the house, but to do a reparation to the dykes, that has made it no longer like the sluggard's garden which it was wont to be. She has even persuaded him to get two lead rones,[2] with fine gilded whirligig tops

[1] *Kything.* Manifesting itself.

[2] *Rones.* Water-spouts for carrying the rain off the roof.

to them, such as no man in this country-side remembers to have seen, for they came all the way out of Glasgow; and I was obligated to give the school the play when the plumbers came to set them up. Over and above all the good that she has done in this way, making the walks paths of pleasantness indeed, the redding up[1] of the Craiglands has had a manifest effect in the way of example among ourselves, and we have several new houses bigging.[2] Among others, there is some talk of taking down your grannie's, which she's a thought fashed at,[3] having been so long her home; and she would rather bide in it as it is than flit to a better, which she is well enabled to do, out of your dutiful kindness."

Whatever satisfaction our hero derived from these epistles, this one was not entirely without alloy. He remembered with delight the innocent hours that he had spent in the old cottage; and regretted so much that it was likely to be removed before his return that by the next post he wrote to Mr Tannyhill to offer any price for it and the garden, rather than it should be changed or destroyed. The master was delighted with this agency, and lost no time in effecting the purchase; but he was so eager that he gave no less than five-and-twenty pounds,—being, in the opinion of every other inhabitant of the village, full five pounds more than the whole property was worth.

[1] *Redding up.* Setting in order.
[2] *Bigging.* Building.
[3] *Fashed at.* Vexed at.

Our hero, having thus become landlord of the cottage, instructed his exulting agent to see that it was put into the most perfect state of repair, without altering, in any degree, its appearance; and, likewise, to add at the back a small room, "which must," as Andrew said in his letter, "be in a better fashion, with a deal floor, in case grannie was taking any ailment, or I could find time and opportunity to see my old friends,—for I would not like to vex her by taking up my lodging in another dwelling."

This hint begat an expectation that Andrew would probably soon visit Stoneyholm; but when it was known there that he was elected a member of Parliament, the hope was abandoned; and yet the master continued to declare that he could see no change which the elevation had produced in his letters, "for they continue," said he, "as leal-hearted as ever."

Old Martha herself did not rightly understand in what the dignity consisted, but said, "I hope it's no ill, nor onything about the court, where a' sin and corruption abounds. Indeed, I needna be feared o' that; for Andrew, poor fallow, was ne'er cut out for prancing on skeigh[1] horses, or gieing the word o' command to rampaging dragoons, and men of renown, that are proud and mighty in battle."

[1] *Skeigh.* Skittish.

CHAPTER LXXVIII

Politics.

DURING the winter after our hero's election, and before the meeting of Parliament, Lord and Lady Sandyford came to town—much, however, against their own wishes. But his lordship had been persuaded by some of his old friends, public characters whom he esteemed, that he ought to resume his duty as a peer.

On this occasion the Marquis of Avonside, who in all things was a conscientious observer of forms, deemed it necessary, soon after their arrival, to issue cards for a splendid party, in order to exhibit them in their state of reunion to the friends of his family. Among the nobility invited, both as a matter of course and from a wish to bring Lord Riversdale again forward in public life, were several members of the ministry. But the viscount had predetermined never to form any political connection; and when made acquainted with the names and titles of the expected guests, almost resolved to leave London for a time rather than be present; although the occasion was one which, his father endeavoured to convince him,

involved in many respects the honour of his sister. How it should have been supposed to do so, we have never properly understood. At the same time, he agreed with the marquis that a general congregation of all the leading members of the Avonside and Sandyford families was a fitting and expedient manner of showing to the world the satisfaction with which the reconciliation was considered. Before finally deciding as to the part he would perform, however, Lord Riversdale went to Sandyford House to consult the earl on the subject, and, on being shown into the library, found his lordship sitting with our hero.

After some general observations as to the state of the weather—the prelude to all business between Englishmen, except when they meet at Chalk Farm, or any other ultimatum of honour; on these occasions, we believe it is not according to etiquette to criticise the appearance of the morning,—Lord Riversdale mentioned to the earl his embarrassment at the idea of renewing his acquaintance with the statesmen alluded to, adding that nothing but his regard for Lady Sandyford and his lordship would induce him for a moment to hesitate.

The earl pitied the sensitive viscount rather than respected him; for he could discern beneath his extreme delicacy of sentiment much of the hereditary weakness of the marquis, his father, and used, indeed, to say that Riversdale's fine sense of political virtue was but a cutaneous

irritation of the mind. However, he listened to him with great gravity; and when the viscount had made an end of his case, he put on a face of serious consideration, and then said—"In a matter of such importance, I am not, my dear lord, qualified to give you any advice, for, never having been a decided political character myself, (being, indeed, almost in doubt whether I am now considered as belonging to the ministerial or opposition side of the House), I cannot enter into your feelings; but I dare say our friend the member here may be able to understand the importance of so grave a question."

"I should never once have thought of speaking to him," replied the viscount querulously; "for, going into the House under my father's auspices, he has, of course, linked himself to his lordship's party, and will, no doubt, be as anxious to strengthen their number and influence as the marquis himself."

Lord Sandyford smiled at this attack, and enjoyed the anticipation of a retort.

"'Deed, my lord," cried our hero, "ye're all wrong. I came in on my own pock-nook, as we say in Scotland when a man lives on his own means; and I wish your lordship no to go away in the belief that, as a member of Parliament, I hold myself at the goodwill of either prince or potentate, peer or prelate. It's true I mean to uphold and assist the king and constitution, to the best of my judgment. But——"

"I beg your pardon, Mr Wylie; I meant no offence!" exclaimed Riversdale. "On public affairs, and the principles and characters of public men, every one is free to speak. You virtually, indeed, acknowledge yourself to be wedded to my father's party; and, therefore, I am justified in thinking that, like his lordship, you are naturally anxious to strengthen that party."

Lord Sandyford looked seriously at the member, apprehensive that the morbid viscount had gone too far; but our hero, with a significant smile, re-established his confidence.

"It's very true," replied Wylie, "that I naturally wish to strengthen the influence of what you call my party; but the means of doing that lie in the common-sense of the country at large. It's no to be done by votes of members, but by satisfying public opinion, which is the god of the political world. And, my Lord Riversdale, since ye think yoursel' a public man, and wasna blate [1] in expressing what ye thought of me as another, alloo me to say that I do not think my party would be strengthened by the like—I'll no say of you—but of any man who thinks himself privileged to indulge his own humours in the service of the commonweal, or no to serve it at all, just as the wind sits with him."

The earl, afraid that, if he allowed the viscount to reply, the conversation would become still more acute, although he perceived that the member's

[1] *Blate.* Backward.

resentment was satisfied in giving this rebuke, interposed, and said briskly, "I suspect, Wylie, that some part of your animadversions were levelled at me, who, among other derelictions, must reckon the slackened interest that I have for years taken in public affairs."

"As for that," replied Andrew laughing, "I never attached much importance to your lordship as a politician; for you are one of those who are naturally born to be in opposition."

"Born!" exclaimed the earl. "Who ever heard of such philosophy?"

"I should be sorry if ony sic blethers[1] as philosophy were in what I mean. The world's made up of two sort of folk—men of deeds, and men of thought. The men of deeds have aye had the upper hand, and will keep it to the day of judgment; the men of thought are those that scheme and those that find fault; and the ends and purposes of the men of deeds are to carry into effect the suggestions of the one under the correction of the other. Your lordship is no just one of the schemers, nor exactly a fault-finder; but ye're made up of the elements of both, and all your speculations would naturally make you an adversary to the men of deeds, and, of course, in opposition to those in authority and power."

"What says the Stagyrite on that, Riversdale?" said the earl, laughing. "By the shade of the mighty Julius, I have never heard half so good

[1] *Blethers.* Foolishness.

an account of the necessary and natural institution of a parliamentary opposition; and I am persuaded there is some truth in the theory. Indeed, I never heard of a regular opposition-man who, in private life, was an agreeable man of business, however intelligent as such,—a proof that he was deficient in some of those conciliatory business qualities which, in the management of public affairs, are of as much importance as talents. But, Wylie, according to this notion of yours, if I am constrained by nature to be in opposition, even although not belonging decidedly to either the schemers or the fault-finders, I must of course be an inferior among them. You give me but sorry encouragement to re-enter the arena of public life."

"Your lordship," replied Andrew, with animation, "would make a very good king in a limited monarchy, where the constitution so works that the sovereign has never the entire upper hand. But in any other post of power I have my doubts that you would sometimes be gi'en to the breaking of old and sacred things, for the pleasure of mending them; and may be, now and then, trying the mouth of the horse by pulling his bridle unnecessarily. No, my lord, ye're no qualified to shine as a statesman,—I never thought it, (since ye will have my opinion), though no one can mair admire your pleasant talents. Your mind is ouer fine for daily use; something coarser is wanted for the toil and moil, the jangling and

the banter, of public life; and your wisest way, as ye have no chance of being a king of the kind I was speaking anent, is to be the next thing till't. Settle yourself in the princely house of Chastington with your leddy, and there, like two patriarchs, beget sons and daughters; and ye'll serve your country better in fostering the comforts of the tenantry around you than by a' the speeches that ye're able to speak, though ye were ten times better at the art than Pitt and Fox, and a' the rest of them carded[1] through ither."

"Yes!" exclaimed Lord Sandyford, surprised at the superiority thus assumed and felt, while he was amused at its simplicity,—"Yes, my friend, you are right: I am not fit for public life. I have been long conscious of the truth, and I will take your advice; I see its wisdom, and I obey its influence. So you see, Riversdale, as there is no chance of the ministry charming you into their party, they are likely, by my abandoning the intention of re-entering Parliament, to gain as much by this consultation as if you were already spellbound to their service."

The viscount did not much relish the insinuation; but, struck with the remarks which had fallen from our hero, he said, "I think, Mr Wylie, considering what has passed, you may tell me in which of your two great classes you place me. The result may be as decisive as with his lordship."

[1] *Carded.* Mingled.

"I dinna think so," replied Wylie; "ye're no made of such malleable metal. But though I canna say just what ye are, knowing so little of you, I'll undertake to tell your fortune. When the marquis is a little mair failed,[1] ye'll be called up to the House of Peers; and I'll no despair of hearing you move the address, in answer to the speech from the throne, in the first session after."

Lord Sandyford threw himself back in his chair, unable to control his laughter, while the astonished viscount changed colour.

"Look at his feet, Riversdale!" exclaimed the earl, "look at his feet! They must be cloven."

"Noo, an ye had the decision of character which the earl possesses," said Andrew, rising to take his leave, "ye would just at once, on this spot, not only resolve to take your place at your father's table, along with the ministers, but ask them, before they quit the house, to summon you to the peers, because ye dislike the coarse manners and the turbulent debates of the Commons. It will come with you to that at last; and there's no apostasy in't, for the French Revolution, that ye set out (as I have heard) with worshipping, has apostatised to such a degree that the question is no longer whether mankind are entitled to have liberty or equality, but whether they shall submit to a military despotism. When things are brought back to the state of the golden age of the Eighty-nine, ye

[1] *Failed.* Frail.

may indulge your philanthropic politics. But till then, my lord, ye may, with a safe conscience, support any ministers in this country that set themselves against the domineering insolence of a pack of licentious adventurers, that hae no other object in view but to riot at Paris, like our own sailors at Portsmouth or Plymouth when they receive prize-money."

And with this the conversation and interview ended; for Riversdale came away at the same time with our hero, and, as they walked down Lower Grosvenor Street, tried to convince him that, having once abandoned Parliament, it would be inconsistent to take any part again in public life. To all which Andrew only remarked, "Weel, weel, my lord; but make no rash vows, and think on what I was saying."

CHAPTER LXXIX

A Plot.

WHEN Lord Riversdale and our hero had retired from Sandyford House, the earl felt himself irresistibly inclined to play them both a little prank. Accordingly, he soon after went to pay a morning visit to the marquis, with the view of ascertaining who were to be of his grand party.

"I am not sure," said his lordship with affected seriousness, in conversing on the subject with the old peer, "that it will exactly do for me to meet so many of your ministerial friends. Your lordship knows that I have had some intention of resuming my parliamentary duties, and that I have always been considered as belonging to the Whig side of the House."

"That doubt," replied the marquis, with a complacent smile, "shows indeed to which side of the House your lordship belongs; for none of ours would ever think his character or principles likely to become questionable by meeting in private life with even the most violent and distinguished of your leaders."

"Nay," said Lord Sandyford, "I had no

doubts on the subject till Riversdale called this morning, evidently so much in a vacillating perplexity that our friend Wylie advised him to ask the minister at once to summon him to the peers."

"You don't say so?" exclaimed the marquis with delighted surprise.

"I do indeed, my lord," was the answer; "and it is therefore under some apprehension that the event may be consummated when Riversdale meets the minister, that a regard for the delicacy of my own political reputation makes me question the propriety of being of the party."

"It is very surprising," replied the marquis with solemnity, "that Riversdale has never hinted anything to me on the subject. He cannot but know the pleasure and satisfaction which I shall receive on learning that he has at last returned to a due sense of his duty as a member of the British nobility."

"I beg your lordship's pardon," said the earl, still preserving the gravest countenance possible. "Riversdale has not decidedly made up his mind; on the contrary, he is as diffident as a young lady before giving her consent, and some few caresses from the minister may yet be requisite to complete his conversion. But, my lord, among your expected guests, I do not recollect that you have named Wylie."

"He is not invited," was the answer.

"Indeed!" replied Lord Sandyford, with well-

affected coldness. "I thought, considering the part he has played in the drama of which this said dinner is the *dénouement,* his absence will be a blank. Lady Sandyford will be hugely disappointed."

"It did not strike me in that light before," said the marquis; "but I will instantly send him a card, though between ourselves, my lord, his manners are not just in unison with those of the company I expect."

"You will particularly oblige me by inviting him," rejoined the earl; "and I am persuaded that were he brought more into society with Riversdale, the conversion to which your lordship looks forward with so much solicitude will be the sooner accomplished."

The marquis, although naturally dull, saw through the quizzical humour of his son-in-law, and laughing, said, "Really, Sandyford, I know not what to make of you. But has Riversdale in any degree changed his opinions?"

"In truth, my lord, I very much suspect he has, unconsciously. At least, Wylie thinks he will soon change; and I place great reliance on his discernment and sagacity. I would therefore advise your lordship to give the minister a hint."

"Well, well! but joking aside," cried the delighted father, "how does it happen that you, a Whig, should be so anxious to be rid, as it were, of Riversdale?"

"Because," replied the earl, "when I get into

office, I shall employ only the sound and true of our own party; and I have my doubts of Riversdale."

The marquis again perceived that the earl was playing with him, and said, "I see how it is, Sandyford; you have some motive for wishing to see your friend the member along with the minister; and all this is but a manœuvre for some sinister purpose that you do not choose to explain."

"I am sure," replied the earl, laughing, "your lordship cannot suspect I entertain any hope that Wylie, by being brought into social contact with the heaven-born statesman, will return home a Whig, or think less of him as a man than as a minister?"

"You are a most extraordinary puzzle, Sandyford," said the marquis. "Knowing as I do what your party say of my distinguished friend, I should not be surprised were you to confess that you really entertain some expectation of seeing Wylie's confidence shaken in the minister's talents, by witnessing how much that eminent person can bend to the common level of human nature in the friendly moments of convivial ease,—for I have all along suspected that you were not satisfied to find Wylie arrayed on our side."

"Ah! my lord, that was a bold stroke of yours, and certainly I have no reason to be pleased that he has turned a Tory," replied the earl waggishly;

but, in truth, he had never given the subject a moment's reflection.

"Yes," said the marquis, rubbing his hands with glee, "I do take some credit to myself for that, as I doubt not your lordship did intend to return him on your own interest. A man of his talents was not to be lost to the country."

The earl was amused at the idea of the marquis in supposing that the integrity of Wylie's character was so pliant as to be moulded by any parliamentary connection; and said coldly, as if in resentment for the reflection implied on the opposition, but in reality to prolong his trifling with the self-complacency of the old peer, "The loss to the country is by the side he has chosen."

The marquis immediately explained, or, in better English, made an apology, and, of course, the conversation was changed; for the good-nature of Lord Sandyford would not allow him to dally longer with trifles, to which the marquis attached the most serious importance, and with which he could not go further without the risk of encroaching on feelings and prejudices that it would have been as hopeless as cruel to have attempted to change or controvert. The consequence of this conversation, however, was an immediate invitation to our hero, and a visit the same afternoon from the marquis to the minister, to intimate that, by a few particular attentions, he had some reason to hope Lord Riversdale

would be found not altogether incorrigible in his political heresies.

The minister, engrossed with the arduous tasks of his great office during a period of rapid changes and awful events, knew little of the character of Lord Riversdale. He only recollected that several years before, when his lordship entered Parliament, he had heard him spoken of as a young nobleman of very promising talents, but infected with revolutionary opinions. He was therefore pleased to receive so favourable an account of the state of his sentiments, and congratulated the marquis on the prospect of seeing the good old English principles of his family inherited by a son able and qualified to support them with vigour and dignity.

In the meantime Lady Sandyford had received an account from the earl of the conversations of the morning, and freely acknowledged that her opinions, both as to his character and that of her brother, coincided with those of our hero; while she could not refrain from jocularly remonstrating with his lordship for indulging his waggery at the expense of her father, who, she was apprehensive, might in consequence be brought into some awkward dilemma with the minister.

CHAPTER LXXX

A Statesman.

OUR hero, on the day of the Marquis of Avonside's banquet, arrived a short time before Lord and Lady Sandyford. The principal guests were already assembled, and among them the premier, with several of the other ministers who had received invitations. When Andrew was announced, his name, (as one of the marquis's new members), naturally excited the attention of the politicians; and he perceived, on entering the drawing-room, that his appearance did not produce the most reverential impression on the minor statesmen. But the minister, with that bright and penetrating look for which he was so remarkable, darted at him a keen and inquisitive glance; and, as soon as Andrew had made his bow to their noble host, crossed the floor towards him. "His strides," as our hero himself described them, "were as stiff and as long as a splinkey[1] laddie's stalking on stilts;" and, without being introduced, he immediately entered into conversation with him,

[1] *Splinkey.* Slender.

in so condescending a manner that Wylie felt it as particular.

The acute and pedagogue aspect of that great man was not calculated to conciliate at first sight; but there was a charm in the urbanity of his voice, and in the full, rounded harmony of his language, which almost persuaded the stranger that the meagre anatomy of his figure was invested with magnificence and dignity. The moment that the premier spoke, our hero felt the full force of its influence; and for some time stood overpowered, at once by its effects and the sense of an affability too artificial to be agreeable. The calm, sustained voice and measured sentences gave him, indeed, a feeling of the existence of a faculty far superior to the more various and impassioned eloquence which occasionally burst from Lord Sandyford; but, under all the acquired habits and accomplishments of the minister, he intuitively discovered that lofty pride which constituted the hard feature of his character, and he would have retreated from his condescension. This, however, the other was determined not to permit; for he had made himself, in some degree, acquainted with the history and talents of all the new members returned at the late election, and had received a strong impression (but not altogether a correct one—for it was chiefly from the marquis) of the professional address and general ability of our hero, and was resolved to cultivate his acquaintance particularly.

He had, therefore, as we have mentioned, immediately addressed him in a distinguished manner,—flatteringly on those topics with which he conceived him to be best informed. But neither by professional subjects, nor by public affairs, nor by the principles of political economy, nor by the beauties of classic literature, nor by the ancient or modern history of England or of Europe: no, not by one of all the different tests which he was in the practice of applying to strangers, especially to young members of Parliament, did the minister obtain a single answer that in any degree corresponded with the opinion he had been taught to form of Wylie's intelligence and sagacity; and he was on the point of turning away from him to inquire of the marquis if this was indeed the new member for Bidfort, of whom his lordship had spoken in terms of such admiration and respect, when Lord and Lady Sandyford were announced.

The moment the earl entered the room, he saw Andrew's embarrassment, as he stood with the premier, (like, as his lordship often said, a guinea-pig beside a camelopard in the plates of some cheap edition of Buffon), and almost immediately joined them.

The minister was slightly acquainted with the earl: he had heard of his talents, and he knew his history. He accordingly addressed him in his best and freest manner; insomuch that our hero could not but admire the tact and spirit with which his lordship's peculiarities were so

dexterously treated; while at the same time he was unconsciously obliged to notice the striking contrast between the elegant natural freedom of his patron and the formal and elaborated affability of the statesman.

When the first salutations were over, the earl looked merrily at Andrew as he said to the minister, "I hope my friend Wylie is to move the address on the king's speech? He looks as if you had been saying he was expected to do so!"

"If it would afford any gratification to your lordship that Mr Wylie should undertake the task, an arrangement may be made for that purpose," replied the minister.

The earl bowed, and said, with a smile that was felt as it was meant, "I can have no wish to interfere with any ministerial arrangement;" and he added, in a still gayer strain, "But I should like to hear what view my friend would take of the expediency of continuing the war, the usual topic on such occasions."

"I fancy," replied Andrew, "that there can be little doubt of that expediency for a twelvemonth or so yet."

"Yet!" exclaimed the minister, struck both with the word and the manner in which it was said. "Do you think, then, that the continuance of the war ought not to be regulated by events? ought not to be contingent on the development of circumstances? And that it is so governed by

natural laws as to partake in some degree of the nature and duration of an organised existence?"

"Just so, sir," replied the new member; "for all the wildfire of the French Revolution is burned out, and Boney, the Sorrow,[1] though he calls himself a consul, is just a king: all things are settling into a kingly order again, but no of a peaceable sort. On that account, a peace is, I'm thinking, the only way of carrying on the war."

"How so?" said Lord Sandyford, interested by the remark, and by the effect which it seemed to produce on the statesman.

"Because," replied our hero, "the frame of government that's now in France is the creature of the public opinion which was begotten out of the events of the war, and is only adapted for a state of tribulation and warfare; and, therefore, if ye wish to see the downfall of Boney's dominion, ye must subject it to a change of public opinion, the which change will grow out of a state of peace. But I have a notion that it's no just expedient yet to come to terms with him. He must be alloow'd to feel himsel' more settled. Ye must give him length of rope, that he may grow a little more unbearable before ye make peace; for it's only by letting the wud[2] deevil o' a body believe it may do what it likes that ye're to wile him and his legions into the snare o' destruction. His power is only to be cast

[1] *Sorrow.* The word is used as if to denote a personification.

[2] *Wud.* Mad.

down by his own folly; and ye maun submit to make peace belyve,[1] just to let the world see that his system is no one which can be endured in peace. In short, it's my conceit that there can be no durable peace contracted with rampageous soldiers; and what will France do with all her armies in a time of peace? She'll just gang again to war, and the world will rise in a rage to put her down, as a wild beast that must be driven into a den and muzzled there."

The minister said nothing; but when Lady Sandyford came up, and drew Andrew aside to speak to him concerning some little affair that she wished him to do for her, he remained for some time thoughtful, and then addressed himself to Lord Sandyford, saying, "Mr Wylie has placed the expediency of making peace with France in a singular point of view. I perceive that he deserves his high character; although he is in acquirements far below mediocrity, and in the ostensible glitter of talent greatly inferior to many men, who can form no such conception of that policy which future considerations may render it expedient to adopt."

Dinner was announced; and, in taking his seat at the table, the minister placed himself beside our hero, and treated him with that freedom which constituted one of the powerful charms of his private life.

[1] *Belyve.* By times.

CHAPTER LXXXI

A Proselyte.

LORD RIVERSDALE, from a presentiment arising either from the prediction of our hero, or from some consciousness of a change within himself which he was averse to acknowledge, did not make his appearance in the drawing-room, and in taking his seat at the dinner-table, kept as far aloof as possible from the minister, in order to avoid the seduction of his attentions. The Earl of Sandyford, suspecting the viscount's feelings, and his own playful disposition having been renewed to a boyish gaiety from the time of his reunion with the countess, could not resist the temptation of bringing him at once into communion with the stately premier. Accordingly, as he happened to sit next Riversdale, he observed to him that his acknowledgments to the minister's salutation were so cold and distant that it must have attracted the notice of all present; and that people might think it weak of him to infringe the reciprocities of social life by such a decided manifestation of political prejudice. This was quite enough to make Riversdale

change his whole demeanour. From that moment he used innumerable little artifices of address to engage the attention of the statesman; and not long without effect, for the quick eye and quicker mind of the minister almost instantaneously discovered that Riversdale was actuated by some motive, and, under the impression which the marquis had given him of a change in the viscount's opinions, attributed his attentions to that source. A most delightful equivoque of deference and submission on the part of the viscount, and of compliments and courtesies on that of the premier, was in consequence performed between them, to the infinite amusement of Lord Sandyford. Things, indeed, went so far that our hero became interested in the result; not, however, suspecting the cause till he happened to observe the arch-roguery with which the earl was watching the progress of the scene.

"I think that Lord Riversdale," said the member, whisperingly to the minister, "would not be ill pleased to move the address in the peers: ye should give him a summons."

This was somewhat in a plainer and more point-blank style than statesmen are accustomed to receive suggestions; but the premier had by this time formed a correct opinion of Wylie's downright character, and observed laughingly, at perceiving that the motives of his reciprocities with Riversdale were so clearly seen through, "Will you propose the thing to him?"

"I'll no object to do that; but ye should first try to show him that ye're no continuing the war against the liberties of mankind," was the reply.

The minister was still more diverted by this remark, and said, "In that case, I can employ no better argument than your own in the drawing-room."

Lord Sandyford, observing the undertone in which this brief dialogue was carried on, partly guessed the subject, and shook his head significantly to Wylie; nothing further, however, took place while the ladies remained at table, for the minister began to condole with the Duchess of Dashingwell, who sat at his right hand, on the necessity he should be under of imposing some new tax, affecting to consult her grace whether cats as well as dogs might not be rendered productive to the revenue, amusing her with his badinage, to which, with a sort of jocular good taste, he gave an air of official formality that was admirably in character with his own peculiar manners.

When the ladies had retired, he took an opportunity to advert to some recent explosion of popular feeling, remarking, with sincerity, that prior to the American war the European Governments were so strong that they undervalued insurrections; but that since the French Revolution there was some danger of falling into the opposite error, and that many of the harmless ebullitions of the

populace ran the risk of being considered as political dangers. The perfect clearness, beauty, and candour with which this was stated excited the admiration of all present, and was in charming unison with the sentiments of Lord Riversdale. Even the Earl of Sandyford, who had no particular esteem for the minister, was delighted alike with the liberality of the sentiment and the inimitable elegance and perspicuity of the illustrations. Our hero alone had any suspicion of the design for which it was made; but he also sat in admiration—less, however, of the matter, than of the address of the speaker.

The conversation then naturally diverged to subjects connected with popular governments, in which the earl bore a distinguished part, and expressed himself on the vanity of popularity with such perfect grace that every one who heard him deplored in their own minds that such superior talents should have so long been misapplied. In illustration of his opinions he repeated:—

"For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd?
And what the people, but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?
They praise and they admire they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk,
Of whom, to be dispraised, were no small praise?"

"Were it not," said the minister, "that Milton was a republican, I should think, from the rhythm and dignity of these verses, that they were of his composition. Is it an imitation by your lordship?"

"They are really Milton's," replied the earl; "and these sentiments he ascribes to the Saviour, in answer to the temptations of Satan, and in his work which he most esteemed, *Paradise Regained*."

"If that's the case, they must have been dictated by a penitent spirit; for he would not put anything in the mouth of the Saviour that he did not believe or venerate," said our hero. "He may, in his younger days, have been a republican, like many other clever lads; but I doubt, with such notions of the instability of popular opinion, he didna depart this life in that delusion." And in saying this, Andrew looked across the table to Lord Riversdale, who sat in a state of strange pleasure at hearing it so ingeniously averred that Milton had probably lived to repent his republican enthusiasm.

Wylie's remark gave the minister his cue, and, with that felicity of exposition which transcended all Greek and Roman fame in oratory, he took, in his most captivating colloquial manner, a general view of the progress of the French Revolution, and dexterously interweaving the suggestions of our hero with respect to the continuance of the war, demonstrated to the entire satisfaction of Lord Riversdale that, whatever was the opinion

of the opponents of Government as to the origin of the war on the part of England, the apostasy of France from her own principles had been so decided in its character, so violent in its effects, and had carried her so far, or (as Mr Burke said of that emigration of opinions which characterise the new Whigs) had so transported her beyond Aurora and the Ganges, that England, merely by remaining stationary in her principles, was evidently become the champion of whatever of liberty, of order, and of honour existed in the world.

The effect of this exposition was irresistible on the wavering mind of Riversdale, and, when Parliament met, the prophecy of Wylie was in the main part fulfilled. His lordship was called up to the peers by summons; and though he did not move the address, he took his place on the ministerial side of the House without exciting the slightest observation. His old friends, indeed, had been accustomed for years to consider him as entirely alienated from their party, or rather as having never joined it; while the members of his father's side regarded his accession as the natural result of the hereditary politics of the family. Much, therefore, as the Marquis of Avonside esteemed our hero for the part he had taken in the reconciliation of Lord and Lady Sandyford, he regarded the conversion of his son as conferring a far greater obligation, especially when the minister informed his lordship that he

considered it to have been effected by the singular shrewdness with which Wylie had thrown out the hints that had enabled himself to speak with so much effect to the undecided dispositions of the viscount.

CHAPTER LXXXII

The Disclosure.

FORTUNE poured her cornucopia so liberally around our hero that honours and riches seemed to lie at his acceptance; for although no particular appearance of patronage was shown to himself on the part of Lord and Lady Sandyford, still they both felt themselves so much his debtors, that the powerful influence of their respective relations and connections was unweariedly exerted to promote his advancement. They often remarked to each other, however, that there was something about him which could not be easily explained. The earl had at one time imagined that his rigid frugality was dictated by a sordid desire of riches; but the warmth of feeling which he had shown on so many different occasions had long obliterated every relic of that opinion, and he saw that Wylie could not only be liberal, but even munificent. Once or twice it occurred to his lordship that there was a degree of system in the simplicity of his manners strangely at variance with his vanity in cultivating the acquaintance of persons of rank and fashion.

"I have an idea," said he, in speaking on the subject one day to the countess, "to confer on him what I think he will esteem an honour; for it appears to me that he attaches more value to those things which give him personal consequence than to any sort of pecuniary favours."

What his lordship meant was not then explained; but some time after, when the countess had presented him with an heir, he declared his intention to nominate Wylie one of the sponsors. "For," said the earl, "as we have no chance of getting a fairy now-a-days, I do not think we shall be able to do better."

The countess smiled, and said gravely, "I shall rejoice to obtain so honest a friend for our dear boy, pledged to be his friend by the sacred obligation of the baptismal vows; but if Wylie is a Presbyterian, I fear, from the integrity of his character, that he will decline your offer."

At this juncture of the conversation the Duchess of Dashingwell happened to call, and, on the subject being mentioned, her grace said, "Like Lord Sandyford, I too have remarked that beneath his simplicity he has not only the slyness of a fox, but the ambition of an ancient personage too shocking to be named to ears polite."

"Sometimes," interposed the countess, "it has occurred to me, when I have observed the indifference with which he regarded our female friends, that he had formed some secret attachment."

"Your ladyship," cried the duchess, "has hit the right mark. I do now remember something of the sort; and the wizard of a creature had the power not only to make me his confidant, but by some irresistible spell to constrain me to become his advocate. I do not well recollect what ensued, or how the matter ended; but I have at this moment in my mind's eye a beautiful Scottish girl at one of my assemblies, leaning on the arm of an old maiden aunt who had a neck like a bundle of bamboo-canes. I forget their names, and all other circumstances,—bless me! what a memory I have!—but Wylie was up to the ears in love with the niece—, I think he said from childhood. We must put him to the question on the subject."

While her grace was thus rattling away with her wonted good-humour, the earl and countess exchanged expressive glances. Neither of them was inclined to explain before the duchess what was passing in their minds; but when she had retired his lordship exclaimed, "The Duchess of Dashingwell is certainly as arrant a chattel as ever constituted any part of household furniture. But a bright flake or two of observation fell from her in this last shower of talk that has thrown some new light on Wylie's conduct. If it be true that he was in love some years ago, I would bet ten to one we shall discover some equally wise and romantic motive at the bottom of the principles by which he has been so long

and so constantly actuated. But we must treat him warily."

While our hero was thus the subject of conversation, he was announced; and after the first salutations were over, and while he was admiring the infant in the lap of its mother, the earl said to him, "Wylie, will you have any objection to stand godfather to the little fellow?"

"I doubt," replied Andrew, "it's no in my power. I am no sure of the nature of godfathers and godmothers. But ye shouldna think that I thereby cast any reflection either on them or on the other prelatic doxies of the English. But though I cannot accept the great honour your lordship has propounded, gude forgive me if I say that sponsors are forbidden in the ten commands."

The earl looked and smiled to Lady Sandyford, and then said, in his most generous manner, "This rigid principle teaches me to respect you more than ever; and I now suspect, Wylie, that the state of self-denial in which you live has its foundation in some nobler motive than I have yet been able to discover. I have never heard you speak of your family, nor have you once asked my interest in behalf of any friend."

Andrew blushed slightly at this remark, and said, "I have no friends to fash your lordship about."

"But," resumed the earl in a gayer tone, "the Duchess of Dashingwell, who was here this morn-

ing, has been telling us that she recollects something of your being in love several years ago."

The confusion with which our hero looked left no doubt in the mind of the earl of the fact; and he was on the point of saying in banter, "Have you been slighted?" when, suddenly recollecting the humility of the condition from which he had himself raised him, he checked the levity of his manner, and said affectionately, "If there are any circumstances in your attachment that our influence can improve or change, why do you not explain yourself? Lady Sandyford and myself owe you a debt which we can never adequately repay. You should add to your other kindnesses the favour of letting us know in what manner we can contribute to your happiness."

Our hero felt that he had now at last attained the summit for which he had so long and so perseveringly struggled. Without hereditary connections, without the advantages of education, and without the possession of any of that splendour of talent which is deemed so essential to success in the path of honourable distinction, he had acquired a degree of personal consequence that placed him on a level with Mary Cunningham; and for the first time, not only to any friend, but to himself also, did he avow the force of that attachment which, in the earnest pursuit of the means to indulge and to dignify, he had scarcely allowed himself to cherish, even while it constituted the actuating principle of his life.

Lord and Lady Sandyford admired the delicacy with which he acknowledged the secret motive of his preference for the society of the elegant and the noble, when he described the lowliness of his own original condition contrasted with the rank of the Craiglands family. "But now," said he, "if you will complete the work which, unknown to yourselves, you have patronised so long, I would fain beg of you to lend your countenance to gain for me some portion of that consideration among my old friends which neither money nor manners can command. In short, my lord and leddy, by the blessing of Heaven, through your instrumentality, I am now in a condition to make proposals to Miss Cunningham; but she belongs to an ancient family, and beforehand I would like to satisfy both her and her friends that I do not presume altogether on the weight of my purse to think myself no disparagement to their pride and antiquity. But there's another thing: it's no my design to make any proposals to her if I think that either the world's pelf or patronage would alone rule her to accept me."

"That," said the earl, "is really carrying your refinement a little too far. How are you to discover that she is to be won by any purer influence? Have you any reason to believe that the attachment is mutual?"

"I'll no be so self-conceited as to say," replied Wylie; "but we have had some colleaguing

together, which, if remembered in the spirit of kindness, will be quite satisfactory to me."

And he then recounted those incidents of his early history which we have so circumstantially described, but with so much more wit and humour that both his lordship and the countess were ready to expire with laughter, and declared that, as soon as Lord Chastington was christened, they would accompany him to Scotland, for the express purpose of being introduced to the worthies of the Craiglands and Stoneyholm.

CHAPTER LXXXIII

Intentions.

THE Countess of Sandyford, after the important disclosure described in the preceding chapter, reflected, with an anxiety to which gratitude lent a sentiment of affection, on every means to facilitate the attainment of our hero's object. And, among others, it occurred to her that if a baronetcy could be procured for him, it would give a stamp and permanency to his elevation that could not fail to produce great effect on the hereditary prejudices of the Cunninghams. But there were in this many difficulties; for the delicacy of the earl with respect to political favours would not allow him to move in the business: she even feared that it might induce him to interdict her from seeking the honour through any other channel, although that of her father presented one easy and obvious. Still, so great was her solicitude on this subject, she could not help saying one day, as they were talking together of their intended journey to Scotland, "I think it would be a great feather in Wylie's cap if my father would only take it into his head to obtain for him a baronetcy."

"That I have no doubt his lordship will do on the slightest hint, were Wylie once provided with an adequate estate; it would undoubtedly be of consequence to him as a lover."

"I have a great mind to speak to my father. Do you think I may do so?" said the countess shrewdly.

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed the earl. "I'll speak to him myself; for, as I am now done with all political questions, I feel no impropriety on the subject."

His lordship then explained to her that, in consequence of Wylie's advice, he had resolved to devote his life to promote the happiness and prosperity of his own tenantry, as the best way of serving his country; being fully convinced that, although perhaps able to make some figure in public life, he was not fit to take any commanding station,—and a subordinate neither his rank nor his feelings would allow him to accept. The countess, who also had been taught by experience that he was indeed too eager and sensitive to bear those quips and scorns of the time to which statesmen are exposed, considered the part which Wylie had taken in promoting this judicious determination as not one of the least obligations which he had laid them under. And she said, "I wish that you could persuade him to make a purchase in our neighbourhood. Castle Rooksborough is still for sale. It has many claims on our remembrance. There I performed the first

purely benevolent action of my life, in taking the child of the unhappy Ferrers under my protection; and from that day, and on that spot, began the series of events which, however troubled at first, have brought us such mutual happiness."

The earl embraced her with emotion, and said, "It is a place I shall ever love, and it will grow still more dear to me if we can induce our friend to take up his residence there; for I suspect that, were he married to Miss Cunningham, he will not long remain a Londoner. I fear, however, that he will prefer Scotland. But let us make the trial."

Accordingly, the earl, soon after this conversation, spoke to our hero, and urged him to buy Castle Rooksborough. "If you have not money enough," said his lordship, "as my incumbrances are now nearly paid off, it may be easily managed."

The mind of our hero had never contemplated any acquisition so magnificent. In the most sanguine of his reveries he had never looked much beyond the dignity of an ordinary Ayrshire laird; and in reply to the earl he said, "I'm thinking, my lord, that ye give me credit for higher pretensions than I ever entertained; and I have already provided myself with a bit ground in the North. The late Laird o' Wylie gaed last year a' to pigs and whistles, and, the property being for sale, I directed an acquaintance in Edinburgh, Mr. Threeper, who is an

advocate there, to attend the roup, by the which, as he writes me this morning, I am now the Wylie of that Ilk."

"But," said the earl, with a feeling of disappointment, "you may buy Castle Rooksborough too."

"It's far from my hand," was the reply.

"Then I'll tell you what: Assist me to raise the money, and I'll buy Castle Rooksborough. The price will not reduce my income half so low as it was when I first retired to Chastington Hall. I have had no means of gratifying Lady Sandyford in any wish before, and she has taken a fancy to that place; but she would be content were you the purchaser. Perhaps, if you prove a thriving wooer, we might get you, in neighbourliness, to reside occasionally there."

Our hero, when the earl adverted to the effect which the purchase would have on his own income, made a slight convulsive movement; for he perceived that his lordship had resolved to buy the estate, not so much to gratify the countess, as with a view of giving it to him; but he took no notice of what he suspected, observing only that no doubt his lordship might now easily raise the money,—adding, however, in a way which convinced the earl that his intention was discovered, "Nor, my lord, will it be any great loss, for the rental of Castle Rooksborough will no make the bargain all dead loss. I will, however, be plain with your lordship. Within myself I

feel that were the object of my ambition attained, or found impossible to gain, I shall then have but small cause to continue in this part of the country; for I have ever looked to taking my rest among the scenes of my young days; for still, in my thought, the mornings there are brighter than those I have seen in any other place, the evenings far grander, and the nights thicker set with stars. It is but a boy's fancy; but to me, in all my prosperity, it has been like the shepherd's clothes of the honest man that was made a vizier, as I have read in a book called the *Pleasing Instructor*. I have treasured it in my heart, where others hoard their dearest wishes, and I could never part with it now without forgetting myself. However, come what come may out of our journey to Scotland, I'll pay your lordship a yearly visitation, just an it were for no more than to keep me in remembrance of the humble state from which you have raised me."

Lord Sandyford was so much affected by the sensibility with which this was said that he pressed the hand of Wylie and retired without speaking.

CHAPTER LXXXIV

The Baronetcy.

In the meantime, the countess, intent to procure the honour of a baronetcy for her friend, had been closeted with her father, the marquis, on the subject. She was well aware of his lordship's peculiarities, and knew that, if she immediately requested him to ask the title, he would, in all probability, have raised many objections, and probably in the end refused. A woman of address, and now awakened to the consciousness of all her ascendant faculties, she attacked his lordship in the most effectual manner. Before broaching the subject, she inquired how her brother, Lord Riversdale, seemed to feel under the honours of the peerage; and when her father assured her that he promised to be a great accession to the ministerial phalanx, although he had not then taken any prominent part in debate, she observed that they were all under the greatest obligations to Mr Wylie.

"Yes," replied the old peer; "in him, the minister tells me, I have drawn a capital prize; for his shrewdness in committees is worth all the noisy talents of the debaters."

"I should not be surprised were the minister to detach him from your lordship, and make him his own," said the countess.

"That is not likely," answered the Marquis of Avonside; "for he knows that, by being my member, Mr Wylie is as effectually his own as if he were returned on a pure Treasury interest."

"I cannot even affect to controvert your lordship's opinion on such subjects," said the countess; "but it occurs to me that the ministers, if they set so high a value on him, will naturally be desirous to attach him exclusively to themselves, and I should not be surprised were they to charm him into their circle by the offer of a baronetcy."

"I do not suppose," replied the marquis thoughtfully, "that Wylie can already expect to be raised so soon to that rank."

"It is impossible," rejoined the countess, "to say what are the expectations of ambitious men; and when we reflect on the history of Wylie, it is not to be disputed that he is ambitious, from whatever cause the passion may have sprung."

"You surprise me, Augusta," said her father; "it would be a most ungrateful thing were Wylie to throw the weight of his great talents into any other scale. He surely cannot forget what I have done for him."

"True," replied the countess. "I do not think he will forget that; but then he may place opposite to your favours,—observe, however, my lord, that I do not myself think so,—he may place

opposite to them the obligations he conferred in bringing about my reunion with Sandyford, and especially in the address by which he made a proselyte of my brother Riversdale. Perhaps, therefore, it might be as well—probably your lordship has already formed some plan on the subject—to raise him at once above the effects of ministerial influence by procuring him a baronetcy."

"Certainly, Lady Sandyford, I did think some time or another of using my influence for that purpose; but not exactly in the course of the first session of his parliamentary career. But, considering the sensation he has produced in the highest quarter, I do not think that it would be a bad stroke of policy were I at once to rivet him to me for ever by obtaining for him a baronetcy."

"It would," replied the countess, "induce the world, and particularly political men, to wonder more and more at the great efficacy of your lordship's predominant influence. Besides, I should like above all things to have it in my power to address Mr Wylie by the title of Sir Andrew; for you are aware, my lord, that although yourself and Sandyford have most honourably rewarded his heartfelt friendship to us, as yet I have had no means of showing him any gratitude, and therefore, were it at all consistent with your lordship's public views to procure a baronetcy for him, I would ask it as a favour to myself."

"Really, Augusta, you are so very considerate

that I should almost be tempted to gratify you in this, even were the policy of my family in some degree opposed to it. But seeing the likelihood of the ministers trying to enlist our little friend entirely to themselves, I cannot serve my public and private interests better than by taking measures to obtain for Wylie the rank to which you allude."

The same day the marquis sent for Sir Charles Runnington on the subject, and instructed him to proceed in the proper manner to obtain the consent in the proper quarter to a baronetcy for our hero.

Sir Charles, as we have long ago stated, was a diplomatic character in the interest of the marquis; and in the most strict sequence to his instructions he proceeded, step by step, to agitate the question and to solicit the honour. In this business he had occasion to ask an audience of the premier; and on stating the object of his visit, that great man said at once promptly, "Is it possible, Sir Charles, that Mr Wylie himself can desire such a thing?"

"It will doubtless be gratifying him to receive the honour," replied Sir Charles, with a simper meant to be expressive.

"Very well, he shall have it," exclaimed the minister; "but I thought a man of his sense would never have aspired to any empty title. Nevertheless, he shall have it. I always feel a particular gratification in obliging my noble friend

the Marquis of Avonside; indeed, his lordship's claims on Government are of the first class, and it is not so much my desire as it is my duty to satisfy all his reasonable wishes."

Sir Charles was delighted with the success of this his only successful mission; and the marquis felt singularly obliged that the request was conceded, not only on account of his own public services, but in so handsome a manner that the minister had never once inquired whether his *protegé* was in possession of an adequate estate to uphold the dignity of the honour. Thus, to the surprise of our hero, and of all his friends but those in the secret, he was, on the following Saturday night, gazetted a baronet, by the style and title of Sir Andrew Wylie, Baronet, of Wylie, which, for the benefit of our English readers, we should add is, in the good legal language of the north, Sir Andrew Wylie, Baronet, of that Ilk (or, of the same).

CHAPTER LXXXV

The Return.

WHEN the necessary preliminaries were arranged for the journey to Scotland, the earl and countess, with Sir Andrew, set off in the same carriage. It was the intention of Lord and Lady Sandyford to visit Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret Maybole at their seat of Auchinward, in Ayrshire, ostensibly in fulfilment of a promise which the countess had long made to her ladyship, who had been one of her mother's most particular and esteemed friends, but really, as the earl said, to make from that stronghold of generous feelings and affections reprisals on the pride and prejudices of the Craiglands.

We shall not trouble our readers with any account of their journey, which was performed with all convenient expedition, till the travellers reached Kilmarnock, where they separated. The earl and countess proceeded to Auchinward. Sir Andrew lingered some time at the inn, in order to throw his arrival at Stoneyholm late in the evening, and partly to inspect the re-edification of the town, which had been accomplished during

his absence from Scotland. As he walked from Brian's Inn to the Cross, he felt something like sorrow to see that the place which the stands of the sweetie-wives used to adorn on the fair days, when he visited the town in company with Charles Pierston, was obliterated. A spacious and handsome street rendered it difficult to recognise the old houses which still remained in the neighbourhood. The improvements appeared to him like the changes produced by time and climate on the face of an early friend, when seen after an interval of many years; and although they bore testimony to the prosperity of his native land, they were yet, to his feelings, but as tombstones erected over the remains of ancient simplicity and the venerable manners of the olden time.

Having returned to the inn, he ordered a chaise for Kilwinning, as he intended to walk from thence to Stoneyholm. Why he should not at once have proceeded to his grandmother's would require more metaphysics to explain than the reader who stands in need of an explanation could comprehend. Possibly it may have originated in some wish to contemplate at leisure the scenes of his youth, or to enjoy the balmy freshness of the summer evening, or in some token of humility or silent expression of thankfulness for the happy circumstances in which he had been permitted to return; perhaps, from a sentiment of affection towards less fortunate friends, he was

averse to obtrude upon their view any indication of the prosperity which had crowned his adventures. Be this as it may, however, he proceeded to Kilwinning.

It was a beautiful evening. The sun set in all his glory beyond the hills of Arran, and the peak and summits of Goatfell, covered with a fine aërial haze, glowed, as it were, with an internal principle of splendour. The sea in the Bay of Ayr lay like molten gold, and Ailsa rose empurpled in the distance like a magnificent amethyst; while the whole coast, from the towers of Culzeen to the promontory of Ardrossan, glittered with towns and villages, and the seats of many who, like our hero, had returned home to enjoy the fruits of their prosperous adventures.

Everything in the spacious view was calculated to calm the mind and expand the feelings. The summer was clothed in her richest verdure of luxuriant fields and leafy boughs, the streamlets flowed in clearer currents, and the colours of the broom and the daisy were unwontedly bright; the birds in the hedgerows seemed to hold a gentle and harmonious interchange of occasional notes rather than to indulge in their own peculiar songs; even the crows, as they made way to the rooky woods, hovered in their flight, as if they partook of the general composure of all nature; and the angler, returning home, lingered in his path, and frequently

paused to admire the flakes of fleecy gold that floated over the setting sun.

There are but two situations in which the adventurer returning home can duly appreciate the delightful influences of such an hour of holiness, and beauty, and rest: the one, when he is retreating from an unsuccessful contest with fortune, when, baffled and mortified by the effects, either of his integrity or of his friendlessness, he abandons the struggle, and retires to his native shades as to the embraces of a parent, to be lulled by the sounds that were dear to his childhood, and, he fondly hopes, will appease his sorrows and soothe him asleep for ever; the other, when, like our hero, conscious of having achieved the object of his endeavours, he comes with an honest pride to enjoy that superiority over his early companions which, after all the glosses that may be put upon the feeling, is really the only reward of an adventurous spirit. Both prompt to the same conduct; but the maimed, and the luckless, and the humiliated, shrink from the view, shivering with grief as they remember the thick and blushing promises of their spring, and contrast them with the sear and yellow leaf of their withered and fruitless autumn.

By the time Sir Andrew reached Kilwinning, the village fires and the stars were shining out, and the full moon, which had risen over the shadowy masses of the woods of Eglinton, tinted

the leaves of the hedges and the ripplings of the Garnock water with a flickering and silvery light.

Our hero, as he walked to Stoneyholm, recognised every step of the road which he had so often travelled; but it seemed to him that all things, as he approached the hamlet, had become smaller and meaner: the trees appeared stunted, the hedges more rude and irregular, and the distance between each well-known object greatly abridged.[1]

He passed several cottages, with the inhabitants of which he had formerly been intimate; but a strange restraint prevented him from entering any of them. The turnpike house had been one of his favourite haunts, and he had made up his mind to go in; but, before tapping at the door, he glanced in at the window, and saw assembled round the fire a numerous family, comprehending a member from all the seven ages of man, but not one face of an old acquaintance.

The trust of the gate was now in the hands of strangers, and this mutation made him feel a disappointment—gentle of its kind, but melancholy; and he went forward in the dark shadow of the hedges, pondering on a thousand little incidents that had long slept in his remembrance, but which the sight of old and endeared objects, in the shroudy paleness of the moonlight, recalled

[1] See a passage in the *Autobiography* partially quoted in the Memoir prefacing this edition (page lxxv.).

as with the sadness and solemnity of churchyard recollections.

At a turn of the road, where the hedge on the one side terminated, and the river was seen open and glittering, as it murmured in its shallow and pebbly channel, he obtained the first view of Stoneyholm, beyond which the groves of the Craiglands lay dark and massive. Several lights showed where the mansion-house stood; and the tall white chimneys above the trees appeared to him like the sails of a vessel that lay sunk in deep and silent waters.

But the grave and pensive mood in which he thus approached his early home, he was soon sensible, ought not to be indulged; and making an effort to quicken his step and lighten his spirit, he walked briskly to the door of his grandmother's cottage. His intention was to enter suddenly, to enjoy the exclamations of her joyous surprise; but in passing the window towards the door, he heard some one within speaking, and paused irresolute. He listened, and thought that the accents of the voice were familiar; they recalled to his mind, with the distinctness of more than painting, all the most remarkable passages of his boyish years: the amusements he had enjoyed with companions dead or scattered, or chained by fortune to rustic drudgery. Even the image of poor Maggy, the magpie, came up in the visions of that dream of fond remembrance, and trains of feelings and associations

were awakened that filled his eyes with tears; for the voice was that of the worthy Tannyhill, then sitting with his grandmother, penning a letter to himself, in which she earnestly entreated, now that he was become a great and grand man, to let her see him before she died. With a merry hand and a beating heart, he tirled at the pin,[1] and, as the schoolmaster admitted him, he went forward into the light before old Martha was aware.

But we leave the reader to imagine what ensued, while we refrain, in reverence, from presuming to describe the joy and the piety of that hallowed scene.

[1] *Tirled at the pin.* Worked the handle of the latch.

CHAPTER LXXXVI

The Church.

THE next day being Sunday, Sir Andrew took an early walk in his former favourite haunts among the woods of the Craiglands, and returned to his grandmother's cottage without having met any of his early friends. While they were at breakfast, which consisted of the same homely fare that he had been accustomed to in his youth, the master called for the purpose of inviting him to walk to church with him. That modest and gentle being still seemed to regard him as the same curious boy that he had so long before known; nor was there anything in the demeanour of our hero during the interview of the preceding evening to make him suspect that riches and honours had in aught changed the simplicity of his original character.

Sir Andrew, however, declined the invitation. "I canna gae wi' you the day, master," said he; "for grannie will expect me to cleek wi' her,[1]

[1] *Cleek wi' her.* To walk with her arm in arm.

and aiblins[1] to carry her big Testament as of old, tied in a napkin under my oxter."[2]

There was a little waggery in the manner in which this was expressed, but of so moderate a kind that it might have passed for sincerity. He had indeed resolved in his own mind to resume his former familiarity, as well as the broad accent of his boyish dialect: not that the latter required any effort, for he had carefully and constantly preserved it, but he had unconsciously adopted a few terms and phrases purely English, and, in the necessity of speaking intelligibly to his clients and fashionable friends, had habitually acquired, without any of the southern tone, considerable purity of language. The characteristic answer of his grandmother, however, set the matter at rest.

"No," replied Martha, "though I'll hae great pride and pleasure in seeing you, Andrew, walking at my side to the house of Him that has preserved you in the hollow of His hand, and in the skirts of His garment, as the shepherd tenderly does the helpless lamb, I maunna forget that ye're noo a man whom the king delighted to honour, and that it's my part, baith as a liege and a Christian, no to require onything at your hands that would misliken the favour of Providence wherewith you have been blessed, and raised into the light that shines on high places."

[1] *Aiblins.* Perhaps. [2] *Oxter.* Armpit; then, arm.

Sir Andrew looked at the worthy master, whose eyes were suffused with delight at this expression of a pious and venerable humility; and in the same moment he rose from his seat and walked to the door to conceal the responsive sympathy of his own emotion.

As it was soon known in the village that our hero had come to visit his grandmother, before the bell began to ring many of the inhabitants were assembled in the churchyard; and when he was seen coming along the path, with Martha on his right, and the master on his left, a buzz and a pressing forward among the spectators showed the interest his arrival had excited. The old people observed, with a lively sentiment of kindness towards him, that he was dressed much in the same style as when he left them; but they became diffident and bashful as he approached, and some of the farmer lads, who had been at school with him, respectfully took off their hats. The innocent Tannyhill smiled as he looked around, and felt as if he was participating in the honours of a triumph. But Sir Andrew himself appeared more sedately cheerful, and shook hands heartily with all his old acquaintance; and to those who possessed any peculiarity of humour he said something blithe and appropriate, which showed how perfectly he remembered them all. Among others, he recognised old Thomas Steek, the tailor, leaning on his crutch, and said to him, "Ye see the Lunnoners haena been able to put

me in a better fashion than you and Clipping Jock did."

On reaching the church door, where Mr Covenant, the elder,—a tall, pale, grey-haired man with a cocked hat, a white three-tier wig, and a blue cloak—was standing at the brod,[1] he paused for a moment, and allowed the master and his grandmother to pass on before him. The crowd, especially the school-boys, had followed close at his heels, in the expectation of seeing him deposit some liberal donation to the poor. They reckoned on nothing less than a handful of gold, and at first it appeared that he had some intention of realising their expectation; but he checked himself, and, instead of throwing anything into the plate, gave the elder a slip of paper to be sent up to the precentor, and simply said to him, "Mr Covenant, I'm no just so weel prepared at this moment to do what I ought, so ye'll come to me the morn's morning betimes, when I can better testify my thankfulness for being restored in safety among you." And in saying these words, he walked thoughtfully to the pew where his grandmother sat, and took his old place at her side.

The church was unusually crowded, and all eyes, till the minister entered the pulpit, were turned towards him, as he sat looking on the reading-board, and tracing his still unobliterated

[1] *The brod.* The collection-plate. See Note A, *Annals of the Parish.*

initials, and the outlines, of birds and houses, which formerly, in the languor of Dr Dozadeal's discourses, he had inscribed with a pin, to the great displeasure of his grandmother.

When Mr Symington, who had succeeded Dr Dozadeal in the ministry, after the doctor's call to the better stipend of Bunnockhive, rose to give out the psalm, Sir Andrew, startled by the sound of the new voice, was roused from his reverie, and felt for a moment as if all the incidents of his life, from the time he had last sat in the church, were the impalpable fancies of one of his youthful dreams; and this feeling, when the venerable divine read out the two first lines of the thirtieth psalm,

> "Lord, I will Thee extol, for Thou
> Hast lifted me on high,"

one of those which he had repeated to Mary Cunningham, made him involuntarily turn his eye up towards the laird's loft, where it again met for a moment the same bright and smiling orb that he had so often seen sparkling in the same sphere.

Mr Symington possessed more of the pastoral virtues of his office than his predecessor, but he was neither an eloquent nor an interesting preacher, nor was his subject calculated that day to attract the attention of our hero, so that, after the opening of the sermon, Sir Andrew began to look around him, and to discover, with a

mingled sentiment of pleasure and sorrow, many faces that he distinctly recollected. All of them, however, had suffered from the withering breath of Time. There were one or two young girls that still seemed as fresh and blooming as ever; but upon a sharper inspection he saw they were strangers to him, and in the altered looks of the matrons who sat beside them he recognised the mothers for whom he had at first mistaken the daughters.

A cold and penetrating sentiment of grief quivered through his bosom when in several instances he with difficulty made out in countenances depressed, it might almost be said depraved, with premature age, the effects of heavy toil and constant labour, the faces of old schoolfellows, whom he recollected among the boldest and the blithest of all his young companions. But this painful feeling received some alleviation in his seeing that the elder worthies of the clachan still seemed to retain their former respectability, and that, upon the whole, there was a visible improvement in the appearance of the congregation in general.

At the conclusion of the sermon, Mr Tannyhill, who held the threefold office of schoolmaster, session-clerk, and precentor, rose and read from one paper the names of those who, in distress and sickness, desired the prayers of the congregation. He then took up another, which he had folded in his Psalm-book, and with an elevated

and cheerful countenance, as if exulting in the task he was required to perform, said aloud, with an emphatic and triumphant accent, "And Andrew Wylie returns thanks for his safe return."

The instant these words were pronounced, a universal rustle in the church, followed by a low and kindly whisper, showed the impression which their simplicity made on the congregation; and it was observed that the laird, after looking down at Sir Andrew for about a minute, turned to his sister, and said something which appeared to give her pleasure. What Mary Cunningham felt on the occasion was not easily guessed; for she dropped her handkerchief, and stooped to lift it, and when she again stood up she was so engaged in putting it into her pocket, which she did not exactly find so readily as she appeared to wish, that nobody could see her face.

CHAPTER LXXXVII

The Churchyard.

WHEN the congregation was dismissed, Sir Andrew left his grandmother, telling her that, as he wished to speak to some of his old acquaintance, he would follow her home. Accordingly, hastening out into the churchyard, he took his station exactly on the spot where he was wont to exchange the smile of youthful recognisance with Mary Cunningham; and while he was joyfully greeted and welcomed home by every one to whom, in going to church, he had not an opportunity of speaking, his eye was restlessly turned towards the door from which in due time the laird, Miss Mizy, and Mary, made their appearance.

Time had now laid so many years on the shoulders of the laird that he stooped and tottered beneath the load. He no longer wore his hands in his pockets; but with one arm leant on his daughter's, while he supported himself by the other with a tall gold-headed cane, from which dangled a leathern string and tassel considerably above his grasp. Miss Mizy also had some diffi-

culty in moving under the weight of age. Her lean and scraggy figure seemed considerably more awry than formerly; her steps were much shorter and quicker, though she made less way; and her head nodded with a loose and unsettled oscillation, which, even in the energy of scolding the maids, could not be described as emphatic. But Mary Cunningham, though long fully developed into an elegant woman, was still in the pride of beauty. The liveliness of her air was, however, mellowed into a serene and gracious benignity, and it was a Sabbathly theme of regret and wonder to the parishioners that such an heiress should remain so long single.

The moment that Sir Andrew saw "the family" coming, he went toward them with a slight feeling of trepidation. The laird shook him cordially by the hand; Miss Mizy also welcomed him with uncommon briskness; and Miss Cunningham herself looked so pleased that it was observed by some of the shrewd observers around them that "mair strange things had come to pass than that Andrew Wylie should be married to Craigland's dochter,"—an event, in their opinion, which would be a far greater promotion than his seat in Parliament or the honour of his baronetcy.

Sir Andrew walked with the family down the churchyard towards a stile which led into the highway, considerably nearer "The Place" than the gate that opened into the village. In going along a footpath that winded among the graves,

they happened to pass by the tombstone where he had so faithfully been attended in his task by Mary, and with an instinctive glance he observed that she threw her eye on it, and that a slight cast of thoughtfulness at the moment overshadowed her countenance.

"It's something the waur[1] of the wear since yon time," said he softly to her, and her face, in an instant, was covered with blushes.

But, with considerable spirit and gaiety, she retorted, "And I doubt you have forgotten some of your fifty psalms."

Nothing more passed at that time, for the laird, interposing, said to him, "I hope, Sir Andrew, ye'll no object to tak your kail wi' us; but my sister wasna fond to bid you, 'cause we hae only a head and pluck, and a cauld hen. But I ken that ane of Snoozle (the China sow's) wee grumphies was killed yestreen, and gin ye'll promise to intermit with us, just in the way of pat-luck, we'll get it roasted by the time that divine service is ouer in the afternoon. What say ye? I hope and wish ye would come; for it's a great pleasance to me to see and hear of a lad from our ain gait-end that has done so weel as they say ye hae. So I expect ye'll no be blate, but just use your freedom, and tak a bit neighbourly chack o' dinner."

Our hero was delighted with the invitation, and getting at once into the old man's humour

[1] *Waur.* Worse.

said, with a drolling accent, and a significant nod both to Mary and her aunt, "If it's no a sin, laird, to dine out on the Sabbath-day, I'm sure I'll be right blithe to dine wi' you at the Craiglands; but I maun first tell grannie, for fear she should be angry."

"That's a' very right, my man," replied the laird, in something like an affectionate manner; "for she did muckle for you; but I understand ye hae been a kind and dutiful bairn. Howsomever, I hope ye'll come to us."

"I think, brother," said Miss Mizy, "ye might as well bid old Martha likewise; for ye ken she's now a woman of some degree, Sir Andrew being a baronet, forbye a member of Parliament."

"That's very true, Mizy; and she's a decent creature, though a wee overly pridefu'," replied the laird. "So I hope, Sir Andrew, ye'll bring your grannie wi' you. We'll be very content to see her; for I understand Mary Cunningham, my daughter, has a great opinion of her prudence and judgment; and ye ken she got no sma' insight o' character at Mrs Perjink's boarding-school in Emburough, where she was to the outside of three years, whereby she cost me mair ilk year than Doctor Dozadeal had for his stipend before the augmentation."

Miss Cunningham, not much relishing this dissertation of her father, pressed his arm to induce the old gentleman to desist; but this only made things worse, for he said, "Na, na, Mary,

ye needna chirt[1] my arm, for ye ken weel it's true: and yet for a' that, Sir Andrew, ye see she hasna gotten a man, although she's a hantle mair weel faur't,[2] and will hae ten times the tocher o' her mither."

"Ay, but, laird," replied our hero pawkily, "young leddies in her mother's time, I'm thinking, wearna sae nice as they're noo-a-days."

"Ah! ye ken naething about it—ye ne'er was farther aff your eggs in thinking sae," replied the laird; "for I can assure you, Sir Andrew, that her mother was just a sorrow to court. Although she was the seventh dochter of poor Beevesland, there never was sic a flyting heard in a house as there was before she would consent to tak' me; although her father, as ye aiblins hae heard, was drownt wi' debt by the Ayr Bank, and though the downseat of the Craiglands was an almous deed to the best-tocher'd lass at the time, either in Carrick, Coil, or Cunningham."

In this sort of "daunering conversation," as our hero called it, they reached the stile, where he assisted the two ladies and the laird over, and was surprised to find a handsome carriage waiting to receive them. But though the equipage was in a tasteful modern style, the horses and the coachman were in the old slovenliness of the Craiglands. The horses were unmatched, the one being black and the other bay, and they appeared as rough and shaggy as if they had

[1] *Chirt.* Squeeze. [2] *Weel faur't.* Well-favoured.

been taken from the grass that morning, and harnessed without being groomed, which was probably the fact. Old Robin Taigle, the laird's man, performed as many offices as Scrub in the play; and was riding postillion without boots, in coarse grey worsted stockings, with a straw-rope round his off-side leg, to protect it from being chafed by the pole—indubitable proofs that it was extremely probable he had not time, or "couldna be fashed," that morning to attend to either himself or the horses.

Having handed the ladies, and also assisted the laird, into the carriage, Andrew retired, and Robin, with a loud cry of "Jee, brutes!" set off at a sober rate towards "The Place;" while Miss Mizy, putting her head out at the carriage-window, said, "Mind, noo, Sir Andrew, that we'll expect to see both you and your grandmother, and ye'll tak' a hearty welcome for good cheer."

Our hero, as this stately equipage drove away, stood two or three minutes looking after it, and thought, for the first time in his life, that it was no longer a foolish thing to even himself with Mary Cunningham.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

Daft Jamie.

ISNA that a dreadfu' fine coach?" said a voice behind Sir Andrew, as he still continued looking after the carriage. "I'se warrant ye ne'er saw the like o't in Lunnon—though the king's there."

Our hero was a little startled by this salutation, and turning round, beheld daft Jamie standing on the steps of the stile, dressed in an old cavalry jacket. On his head was the crown of a hat, cut into something like a soldier's cap; his neck and legs were bare; and his whole appearance betokened the military vanity of harmless idiotcy.

Jamie was neither of the aborigines of the parish nor a native of Ayrshire, however celebrated that county may be for the production of such worthies. In our hero's time he was not known at Stoneyholm, where, indeed, he was only an occasional visitor, in consequence of making it one of his resting-places in his professional journeys to the periodical reviews of the garrisons of Glasgow and Ayr. His favourite haunt was Greenock, and for the best of all

possible reasons, because, as he said, "the folk there were just like himsel'."

It was his custom, however, when he happened to be at Stoneyholm on Sunday, to follow "the family" from the church to the stile, and to assist the laird into the carriage, for which he was usually rewarded by the ladies with a penny. But on this occasion, as they were squired by Sir Andrew, to whom the attention of the crowd was so particularly directed, and whom he heard spoken of as having come from London with "a power of money," Jamie diffidently kept aloof till the carriage drove off, when, seeing our hero following it with his eye, he naturally imagined that it was in admiration of its splendour.

Sir Andrew, as we have observed, was a little startled at Jamie's salutation; but perceiving what sort of personage he had to deal with, he replied, "Ay, it's a braw coach."

Jamie, encouraged by the familiarity of this answer, came down from the stile, and looking queerly in his face, said, "The leddies didna gie you ony bawbees, but ye're to get your dinner. They baith gie me bawbees and my dinner."

"That's because ye're a captain, ye ken," replied the baronet.

"I'm thinking," said Jamie, echoing the opinions he had heard in the churchyard, "that ye should make up to ane o' the leddies. I hae had a thought o't, man, mair than ance mysel'; but I'm no sure whilk to tak'."

"Is that possible?" exclaimed Sir Andrew.

"'Deed is't," said Jamie; "for though Miss Mary's the bonniest, Miss Mizy keeps the keys, and I'm desperate keen of flesh and tarts. But I'll tell you something: If ye'll speak a gude word for me, I'll do as muckle for you; for I would like unco weel to hurl in that braw coach, and walk my body wi' a golden-headed cane like the laird."

"A bargain be't," said Sir Andrew, laughing; "I'll no fail to do my best for you with Miss Mizy."

"And what for no wi' Miss Mary?" said Jamie, looking at him peeringly; and then he cried, "O ho, my hearty! is that the way the land lies already? Howsomever, there's my hand, through foul or fair—eyes right, and look to your officer."

There was something in this little scene which made our hero feel dissatisfied with himself. He had not given the idiot credit for half the discernment he possessed, and to be quit of him took out a sixpence, and, giving it hastily to Jamie, turned and walked away.

As Sir Andrew ascended the steps of the stile and went home to his grandmother's cottage through the churchyard, Jamie ran leaping and exulting, holding the sixpence aloft between his finger and thumb, straight on to "The Place," where he arrived just as the carriage was driving off after setting down the family.

"What's making you so glad the day, Jamie?" said Mary to him, who was still standing at the door.

"Do you see what I hae got?" was the reply, showing the sixpence; and adding, "Noo, I'll hae 'ay' or 'no' frae Miss Mizy—and if she'll no tak' me, then I'll tak' you. But na; I canna do that noo—honour, honour—that puts an end, Miss Mary, to a' your hopes o' me."

"Ye're certainly, I see," said Miss Cunningham laughingly, "a rich match, indeed; but who gave you the sixpence?"

"The wee man wi' the muckle purse; but I'm no at liberty to say ony mair; so speer nae questions, and I'll tell nae lies!" replied Jamie. "But, Miss Mary, he's a fine bit body yon; I wonder ye canna tak' a fancy till't—eh, Miss Mary, he's just like a bonny wee china pourie, full o' thick ream.[1] Ye would lick your lips an' ye kent what I ken. I redd ye, Miss Mary, to mak' muckle o' him, or I wouldna be surprised an' he fuff'd[2] awa' wi' a' his goud and gear to Miss Jenny Templeton o' the Braehead, that's got the tocher frae Indy. Oh, she's a sonsy, rosy-cheekit lass! I would like to hae a sheep's head wi' as gude a cuff[3] o' the neck. He'll get a bien[4] bargain that gets Miss Jenny."

Miss Cunningham, amazed and surprised at this speech, said, "But, Jamie, what makes you think

[1] *Ream.* Cream.
[2] *Fuff'd.* As if blown.
[3] *Cuff.* The fleshy part.
[4] *Bien.* Full.

the wee man wi' the muckle purse is likely to prefer me first to Miss Jenny Templeton?"

"That's a question amang divines, Miss Mary," replied Jamie. "But if I were in your place, when he's getting his dinner wi' you the day, I would gie him the tappy-tourock[1] o' the pie, and the best leg o' the fat hen; and wha kens what may be the upshot!"

"But, Jamie," said Miss Cunningham, "this is not leap-year. The ladies are not free to court but in leap-years."

"That may be the rule, Miss Mary, in ordinary times. But men's growing scarce—the regiment that's noo at Ayr under orders for America'll tak' a whole thousand awa' themselves—and, gin the war continues lang, ye'll hardly get a lad in time for love or money. So I wadna be overly particular about leap-years; especially when sic a godsend has come to your doors as yon nice couthy[2] Lunnon body:—they say he has a purse o' gold as big as a boll[3] o' potatoes."

"Come in, Mary Cunningham," cried Miss Mizy from the parlour, "and dinna stand clishmaclavering with that haverel there on the Sabbath-day."

"I'm thinking, Miss Mizy, ye'll hae to mend your manners," retorted Jamie. "I may be a haverel, but everybody kens what ye're."

"Come ben, and close the door immediately,"

[1] *Tappy-tourock.* Of the pastry.
[2] *Couthy.* Comfortable, in the sense of "well-to-do."
[3] *Boll.* A dry measure, Scots.

said the maiden lady, still more sharply; at which words Jamie rushed past Miss Cunningham, and, looking into the parlour where Miss Mizy was sitting with the laird, said, "'I hae a saxpence under my thumb, and I'll get credit in ilka toon'; so, Miss Mizy, ye may look to yoursel'. The poor man gets aye a poor marriage, and when I had naething I was fain to draw up wi' you. But the world's changed noo. I'm for a lass wi' a lump o' land, and a young ane too, Miss Mizy. Howsomever, (no to mak' a rent and a rive o't a'thegither between us), gin ye hae the shackle-bane[1] o' a mutton ham, I'll find a corner near my heart for a' the flesh on't along wi' your kindness, Miss Mizy. For I'm growing yawp;[2] and hunger, though it's gude kitchen to a cauld potato, is a wet divot to the low o' love."[3]

"Weel, weel, Jamie, gang but[4] the house, and see what the lasses hae got in the pantry," said Miss Mizy; while the laird, with whom Jamie was a favourite, gave one of those sudden great roaring laughs which are so well known by the generic term of a guffaw, observing, when he stopped, which he did almost as abruptly as he began, "Really, he's a ready-witted fool that."

[1] *Shackle-bane.* Knuckle.

[2] *Yawp.* Having a keen appetite.

[3] *Wet divot . . love.* Wet turf . . flame of love.

[4] *But the house.* The kitchen. In cottages in Scotland there were two rooms only, as a rule: the "but" (the outer) and the "ben" (the inner).

CHAPTER LXXXIX

The Laird's Drawing-room.

WHEN Sir Andrew returned to his grandmother's cottage, and informed her how he had been pressed by both the laird himself and Miss Mizy to bring her with him to dinner, she said, "It's a great honour and testification, my lad, that ye should be invited to dine at The Place; and no you only, but even me. I never thought to see the like o' that; but ye maunna be overly lifted up wi't."

"But will ye come wi' me? What say ye to that, grannie?"

"'Deed no, my bairn," was the judicious and humble reply; "I'm no used to the ceremonials at the banquetings o' the great, and I'm ouer auld noo to learn; but I'm blithe and thankful to see sae great a respect paid to you; for wha that has seen the eydent[1] hand and unwearied foot wi' which I have so long ca'd at my wheel, no to be a cess, would ever hae thought that I would be requeeshted to tak' my dinner in the Craiglands dining-room wi' the family."

[1] *Eydent.* Diligent.

Our hero felt his heart glow with veneration at the motives by which his grandmother was actuated, and he sat for some time in silence. At last he said, "I'm nae dout vera muckle obligated to the laird for his civeelity; but—and I dinna say it out of ostentation and vanity—I may take my place with him at the same board onywhere, and no be thought an intruder; and therefore, if it wasna putting you to an excess o' trouble, I wish ye would go with me to The Place."

"If it's to pleasure you, Andrew, as it's your welcome hame, I'll no make an obstacle wi' my ain objections; but ye ken the laird himself, poor silly carle, has an unco rouse[1] o' his family; and Miss Mizy, though she's vera discreet in some things, looks down on a' poor folk, and was ne'er overly weel pleased when Miss Mary visited me with her hamely familiarity. Howsever, I'll gang wi' ye; but I would amaist tak' it a kindness if ye didna insist."

Our hero, however, had a motive in pressing her acceptance of the invitation; for, retaining a distinct recollection of the peculiarities of both the laird and Miss Mizy, he was desirous to see how far they had infected Mary with their prejudices, being determined to make her behaviour towards his venerable parent in some measure a test of her character, in order to

[1] *Rouse.* "Notion;" conceit.

govern himself in the indulgence of that regard which, although at no period so strong as to merit the epithet of passion, was undoubtedly warmer than, while it was as constant as, fraternal affection.

Accordingly, at the close of the afternoon service his grandmother, on his reiterated request, walked with him to the mansion-house. On approaching the well-known entrance to the avenue which opened from the high-road, he was struck with the air of renovation which every object had been made to assume. The square pillars were not only rebuilt, but the two stone globes, which had lain for many years on the ground, were replaced on their summits. The iron gates, which had not been painted for years before his young remembrance—and one of which had long fallen from its hinges and been drawn aside from its proper station—shone in the fairest white, and swung harmoniously in their proper places. The avenue itself also had undergone a prodigious improvement. It was considerably smoother and better defined along the margin than the king's highway, which was not the case before his departure for London; and the mansion itself had not only received a dazzling white-washing, but the sashes of several of the windows were renewed. Instead, however, of three small windows on each side of the door, as formerly, there was now but one, in the Venetian taste—a contrivance suggested by Miss

Mizy to evade the window-tax, when the ever-memorable triple assessment was proposed. The Place indeed had received very extensive, and even some radical, reformations, and not only bore testimony to the improved spirit of the age, but indicated something of the taste which Mary had acquired during her residence in Edinburgh, and of the influence which she possessed over her father. But it seemed, to the enlarged sight of our hero, to have shrunk prodigiously from its former grandeur, although it was certainly, for Scotland, still a respectable country-seat.

Sir Andrew and his grandmother, on arriving at the door, were shown into the drawing-room by Robin Taigle, now acting in the capacity of footman, having put up his horses. Miss Mizy thought there was no need to be so ceremonious, and the laird himself said it was a work of supererogation; but Mary overruled their objections by reminding her aunt of the free footing in which they had found our hero among the great in London. Accordingly, the drawing-room window-shutters, which had not been opened for at least a fortnight before, were unclosed; and, as we have said, the guests were shown into it by the laird's man.

The drawing-room of the Craiglands, though without question the most splendid apartment in the whole parish of Stoneyholm, and in the opinion of old Martha "just a palace," could

really boast of no very remarkable ornaments, either of decoration or of art. It contained a large unwieldy settee, of coeval antiquity with the first introduction of that species of recumbency into the west of Scotland, being one of the relics of the furniture which the laird's great-grandfather procured for The Place when he changed the ancient castle into a mansion. It had originally been covered with needlework, the skilful endeavour of the then Lady Craiglands and her five daughters to imitate flowers and peacocks, in which they succeeded almost as well, in both effect and design, as the Greenock sculptor who carved the celebrated effigy of Vulcan in the Vennel of that classical town. But Minerva, envious of their success, having, in the shape of many shoulders, worn several holes in the work, the sofa was at this period covered with simple white dimity, as were also the cushions of the chairs.

The walls of the room were stained with green, the most extravagant of all colours, as Miss Mizy told the visitors who admired it; and over the chimney hung a map of Europe, worked on white satin by Mary at Mrs Perjink's boarding-school in Edinburgh, which her father assured his friends was most curiously particular, though France happened to be omitted, either in consequence of the governess believing that Mr Burke declared a fact when he said, "France was struck out of the map," or because in draw-

ing the outline she had omitted to leave room to insert it. On each side of this splendid display of Penelopian industry and geographical knowledge hung two paintings, which were paid for as likenesses of the laird and his lady in the halcyon days of their bridal beauty, but with what propriety was never satisfactorily ascertained. Craiglands himself, however, affirmed that the mole on his wife's cheek was as natural as life, and that the scar on the back of his own hand could not be better represented. Along the wall fronting the window hung twelve ancient coloured mezzotinto engravings in black frames, representing, with all their appropriate symbols, the twelve months of the year. The glasses of several were cracked, and a starred fracture over the face of the blooming May was ingeniously mended by a piece of putty, which entirely concealed her smiles and her beauty. These also were relics of the grand days of the Craiglands; and the like of them, according to the traditions of the family, were not in all Scotland when they were first brought to it. There was but one other ornament on the walls, and that was a looking-glass behind the door and opposite to the fireplace; it was a French plate of considerable dimensions, set in a frame of small ones with gilded rims, so shaped and arranged as to present some almost hieroglyphical indication of leaves and roses; and underneath this pride and glory of the Craiglands stood a second-

hand harpsichord, that had been purchased at Edinburgh for Mary, at the enormous cost (as the laird often repeated) of ten pounds seven shillings, besides the box and the expense of bringing it to the Craiglands.

CHAPTER XC

The Landed Interest.

THE laird was alone in the drawing-room when Sir Andrew and his grandmother entered; and upon their appearance, without moving from his chair, said, "Come awa, Martha, and tak' a seat. I am very well pleased to see you and your grandson, who, I am happy to hear, is a weel-doing lad, and likely to be a great comfort to your auld age."

Sir Andrew felt his blood stir a little at the rude superciliousness of this reception—but the supercilious, however refined, are always rude,—and compassionating the laird's obtuse ignorance and indolence, he soon subdued the heat of the moment, and wisely resolved to make a visit, which he apprehended might otherwise tax his humility, a source, if possible, of amusement. Accordingly, he took his seat modestly at some distance from the laird, whom he slyly drew into conversation by commending the manifold and visible improvements which had taken place in the country during his absence; with all which Craiglands expressed the most satisfactory

acquiescence, till the baronet, in an unguarded moment, happened, among the topics of his commendation, to advert to the diffusion of opulence by the introduction of the cotton manufactures.

"Ah! Sir Andrew," said that illuminated political economist, "it was a black day when poor Scotland saw the incoming pestilence of the cotton-jennies. The reformers and them were baith cleckit at the same time, and they'll live, and thrive, and, I hope, will be damn'd thegither."

"Wheesht, wheesht, laird!" exclaimed the old woman; "that's an awfu' word — remember the Sabbath-day."

"Remember the deevil!" cried this worthy member of the landed interest. "Isna what I say a God's truth? The vera weavers in Glasgow and Paisley hae houses, I'm told, that the Craiglands here wouldna be a byre to. Can ony gude come but vice and immorality from sic upsetting in a Christian kingdom? What would ye think, Sir Andrew: one o' the trash, Macandoe, a manufacturer, had the impudence to bid against my lord at the roup of the Friersland, and not only outbad his man o' business, but even Major Hyder, the nabob from India."

"That," replied the baronet, "was indeed vera surprising, laird; sic a thing wouldna hae happened in the days of my youth, nor in times afore them. But I dinna think the Major o' ony better stock than Mr Macandoe; for his father,

ye ken, was the town-drummer of Kilmaining, and he himself, as I hae heard, listed as a common soldier at the outbreaking o' the American war."

"Ye're no far wrang in some particulars," interrupted the laird; "but he raised himsel' by his merits in the service of his king and country, and made his fortune in the wars o' India, which is an unco difference to cotton-spinning."

"Ay, there's some truth in that, laird," replied our hero. "But what's the story o' this Macandoe?"

"Story! Poogh! He was the get of a Kilwinning weaver," said Craiglands, "and gaed intil Glasgow when the cotton-warks began, where he got credit; but whether by stealing clues,[1] or setting windmill bills agoing, I never heard the rights o'. When he took possession of the Friersland, I was obligated, out o' the respect due to my family, to buy a chaise; for he has got one, and wi' horses and flunkeys too that they say my lord himsel' hasna the like o'. It's enough, Sir Andrew, to gar a body scunner[2] to hear o' weavers in coaches, wi' flunkeys ahint them. Mary would fain hae had me to cultivate a visitation-acquaintance with him, for, as she said, Mrs Macandoe didna want sense, and one of their dochters was at the Edinburgh school, learning manners wi' her, and was a fine lassie;

[1] *Clues.* Wound balls. [2] *Scunner.* Feel a disgust.

but I would as soon sit in a Relief kirk as darken the door o' ony sic cattle."

"Ay, but, laird," interposed the old woman, "there has been a growth o' many comforts since the cotton-warks were brought in. There's Jenny Eydent, when her gudeman brak, and die't o' a broken heart, in the calamity o' the Ayr bank: she was left wi' a sma' family o' seven weans—five dochters, and twa twin-babies o' lad bairns—and no help but her ten fingers. See what she has been enabled to do by the tambouring.[1] There's no a better clad or a better bred family in a' the kintra side. Miss Janet, her second dochter, a weel-faur't[2] lassie, was cried the day,[3] for a purpose o' marriage with John Sailfar, that's noo a captain of a three-mastit ship frae Greenock; and her son Willy, that's so douce and comely in the kirk, to the pleasure of everybody that sees him, is gaun intil Glasgow to learn to be a minister; for the cotton-warks hae made that, whilk in my day would hae been a sore burden, a stock in trade o' mony hands, whom the Lord has blessed with thriftiness and prosperity."

"Ay, but, grannie, ye ken," said Sir Andrew pawkily, "what a rise has since been in the price of butter and cheese. That, to be sure, may

[1] *Tambouring.* Embroidery on a circular frame.

[2] *Weel-faur't.* Well-favoured.

[3] Proclaimed in the kirk. See Note A. (*The Session and Marriages*), *Annals of the Parish*, vol. ii.

have gi'en a lift to the rent o' land; but then the day-labourer's wage it's doubled, and coats and hats are twa prices."

"Really, Sir Andrew," replied the laird, rubbing his hands with satisfaction, and giving one of his inordinate guffaws, "I havena heard sic a gospel-truth for a long time. But they tell me ye're wonderfu' clever, and surely that observe was a proof and testimony of the same. Come, draw your chair closer to mine; for I'm fashed wi' a rheumateese in my arm, and canna thole[1] to converse ouer my shouther."

At this juncture Miss Mizy came into the room, and passing old Martha, took her place in the seat of honour, facing her brother, before she spoke. Our hero, who had begun to gain a little in the laird's good opinion, was somewhat disconcerted by this rudeness, and drew no favourable augury of the manners of Mary, who had not yet made her appearance. The fact was that, after their return from church, Miss Cunningham, whether influenced by the exhortation of Daft Jamie, or by the manners she had learned at Edinburgh, induced her aunt, in consideration of the rank of their guest, to make some additions to the dinner beyond the pig which the laird himself had ordered to be roasted; and in the superintendence and direction of the same the ladies had in the meantime been employed.

[1] *Thole.* Bear.

"Sister," said the laird to Miss Mizy when she had taken her seat, "I'm vastly weel pleased with this lad's sense and discretion."

"Dear me, brother," replied the lady eagerly, "ye forget that he's noo a baronet, and a great Parliament man;" and, turning with a smirk to our hero, she added, "Sir Andrew, ye ken the laird's jocose way, and ye'll no tak it ill if he should noo and then negleck your teetle."

"Oh, no, Miss Mizy! The laird and I are no acquaintance of yesterday, and we can bear muckle wi' ane another for auld lang syne."

"Andrew Wylie," cried his grandmother, "how can ye break the Lord's day by speaking o' songs, and the like o' sic daffing?"

At this crisis Mary entered the room, with her complexion somewhat heightened; but whether from a moral or a physical cause — whether from sentiments connected with seeing our hero an honoured guest in her father's house, or from the reflection of the kitchen-fire, in consequence of her presence being requisite to direct the maids in some of the nicer culinary mysteries that the occasion had made her desirous to see properly performed — is a question that we shall not attempt to settle. The blush, however, of the moment lost none of its gracefulness by the manner in which she went to old Martha, and said, "I am glad to see you, and happy that you have come with"—and she hesitated for an instant, and then added—"your grandson."

She afterwards turned to the baronet, and with a gay but somewhat embarrassed air, said, "Sir Andrew, I fear yon great London folks will have spoiled your relish for our plain country fare?"

"The company," replied Sir Andrew gallantly, "should aye be the best dainties at a' banquets; and the head and pluck, with the sooking grumphie[1] that your father promised, canna fail to please, with Miss Mizy's sauce and your garnishing."

There was a little tendency to a pun in this, which Miss Cunningham perceived and perfectly understood; but her aunt took it as a compliment, while the laird threw himself back in his chair, and roared his delight with one of his heartiest and most ungovernable peals of laughter, declaring, when he stopped, that he had not heard sic a funny saying he didna ken when.

When dinner was announced, Sir Andrew stepped forward two or three paces to give Miss Mizy his arm; but suddenly remembering in what lofty company he then was, he retired back, and followed his grandmother, whom the laird left behind.

Miss Mary probably guessed the object of our hero's alertness and sudden halt; for, instead of going on after her father, as the usual routine of their procession from the drawing-room was on company occasions, at Pace, and Yule, and high times, she abruptly stepped aside, and turning

[1] *Sooking grumphie.* Sucking-pig.

back to the mantelpiece, as if to look for something, contrived to allow Martha and Sir Andrew to enter the dining-room some time before her; thus, without giving any cause for observation, delicately performing that homage which is due to invited guests.

CHAPTER XCI

Breaking the Ice.

IN the meantime, Lord and Lady Sandyford, after parting from our hero, had pursued their journey to Auchinward, where they arrived about the same time that he reached Stoneyholm. Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret were delighted to see them; and when informed of the secret object of their visit, and of the motives by which their noble friends were actuated towards Sir Andrew, who was described as the architect of their happiness, they entered with zeal and alacrity into their views. They told them, however, that Miss Cunningham had the reputation of being exceedingly proud and consequential—the failing, indeed, of the Craiglands family—and that she had already refused some of the best matches in the country.

"As the figure of Sir Andrew," said Sir Archibald, "is not likely to recommend him to a lady's eye, I fear, considering also his low origin, that the undertaking will be more difficult than you imagine. The journey, however, will probably be, in other respects, of advantage to him; for, if he

is decidedly refused, or perhaps disgusted, in consequence of the change that may have taken place in his own taste in so long an absence, he will feel himself free to choose elsewhere."

The countess replied, "There is much in what you say, Sir Archibald, and were our friend an ordinary man, the justness of your observations would make me despair of the business. But there is so much heart about him—he is all heart—that, I do believe, were he to be rejected by Miss Cunningham, he would soon sink into despondency. From what I have observed of his earnest and persevering character, I am persuaded that, if she was not the sole object of his ambition, her image constituted no inconsiderable portion of the motives by which he has pursued, with so much constancy and consistency, one distinct and clearly defined course of life. Had he been animated with the vanity of making a figure in the world, he would certainly have more studied worldly manners; and avarice cannot be considered as even entering into his character, for on all proper occasions he acts with a princely liberality. Nothing but love can account for the care with which, it may be said, he has preserved his original simplicity, and the indifference with which he has seen so many beautiful women who would have been proud of his hand."

The earl, who was listening with delighted ears to the warmth of his lady's eulogium, said, "Why, Augusta, you will make out that Jacob's servitude

of fourteen years, and another wife in the meanwhile, was nothing compared with the constancy of our little baronet."

"Jacob's story," interposed Lady Margaret, somewhat gravely, "is at least a corroboration of her ladyship's opinion; and I hope that opinion is well founded. But I do not think the case at all so problematical as Sir Archibald seems to think it. Women are not so often ruled in their affections by figure, as they are accused of being." And she added, in a gayer style, "We are domestic animals, and the fireside virtues gain more upon us than more showy qualities; especially when we are, like Miss Cunningham, arrived at years of discretion."

"Indeed!" said the earl, in a lively tone; "and pray, Lady Margaret, when do women arrive at years of discretion."

"You must ask some one older than she is," replied Sir Archibald, with a laugh.

"Not so," said the countess; "I can answer for a portion of my sex. A married woman's years of discretion begin when she feels herself dependent on her husband. But to return to the point: Do you visit at the Craiglands family?"

"We call sometimes, and the ladies occasionally come here," was the reply; "but the laird is such an exception to the world in general, that there is no venturing to ask him to meet strangers."

"How then shall I get introduced to him," said the earl, "if you do not invite him?"

"Oh, that can be easily managed!" cried Sir Archibald. "If you think fit, we can ride over to-morrow after sermon, and, as if incidentally, call. Besides, I should like to be introduced to Sir Andrew. I should like, indeed, at once to show the laird in what degree of esteem and respect he is held by his friends. I wish you had brought him with you here; and, of course, on your account, I will at all hazards invite Craiglands."

"We urged Sir Andrew to come all that we could," rejoined Lady Sandyford; "but he was firm and faithful to his own resolution, apprehensive that, if he came here, his grandmother might think he had lost his respect for her."

"You might have given a more romantic colouring to his motive," said the earl, "and perhaps been quite as near the truth, by saying that perhaps he wished to take a peep at Miss Cunningham, before she could have any reason to suspect the object of his journey."

"At all events, my lord, it can do no harm," replied Lady Margaret, "if the countess and I go with your lordship and Sir Archibald to-morrow."

"I should like it of all things," said Lady Sandyford; "for I intend to visit his grandmother. It is a tribute of respect due to the genuine worth

of one that contributed to form a character of so much probity and feeling as Sir Andrew."

It was accordingly arranged that, instead of returning home from their parish church after service, on the day following, Sir Archibald and his lady, with their guests, should drive over before dinner to Stoneyholm; and, in the fulfilment of this intention, they reached the Craiglands gate just as the laird had mumbled grace inwardly to himself, and the party had taken their seats at the dinner-table. Few visits, in consequence (as both Miss Mizy and her brother remarked), were ever more ill-timed; for the dinner would be spoiled, as it was not possible to allow visitors of such a degree to wait; and another embarrassment arose as to what they should do with their guests, for it was absolutely necessary that the laird should attend Sir Archibald and the stranger; and no less so, as Miss Mizy observed, that she and Mary should go to the ladies. This dilemma was, however, speedily obviated by Mary, with promptitude and grace, saying firmly that she would remain at table, while her aunt and father went to the visitors, who, on alighting from their carriage, had been shown into the drawing-room.

"You gentry, Miss Mary," said old Martha, when the laird and Miss Mizy had left the dining-room, "hae a sore time o't wi' a' this ceremonial, and——"

But she was interrupted by one of the maids

looking in at the door, and crying, in a sort of loud under-voice of admiration, "Eh! Miss Mary, it's an English yearl and his leddy—a delightful creature."

Upon which our hero immediately said, "Lord and Lady Sandyford; they are just now on a visit to Auchinward."

"What ken ye o' lords and leddies, Andrew?" exclaimed the old woman; when Mary immediately replied—

"I suspect much more than he gets credit for among us. But prophets are never respected in their own country; and Sir Andrew is as likely in Stoneyholm to be spoken of by his old title as by his new one;" and turning round to him, she said playfully, "Have you forgotten it, Wheelie?"

"No; nor when you last called me by it in the streets of Edinburgh, as I was on my way to London."

Miss Cunningham blushed; but the look which she cast towards him was so much in the sprightly manner of their old familiarity that it told him even Craiglands' daughter then no longer felt that disparity in their condition which he once thought would never perhaps be overcome.

CHAPTER XCII

Preliminaries.

AFTER the reciprocities of the introduction were over, Lord Sandyford, who had previously determined to be all suavity and conciliation, was so tempted by the obvious peculiarities of the laird and Miss Mizy that he could not refrain from amusing himself a little at their expense. Accordingly he inquired with much apparent gravity, if the pictures of Craiglands and his lady, which we have already described, were the portraits of Voltaire and the King of Prussia. The countess, however, soon checked him by asking the laird if he had seen Sir Andrew.

"Atweel we hae seen him: he's noo with his grandmother in the other room. The poor lad, I have understood, is weel to do, and we could do nae less than gie him some countenance."

"But what has become of Miss Cunningham?" inquired Lady Margaret. "I should have been happy to have had an opportunity of making her acquainted with Lady Sandyford."

"She's ben the house with the baronet and his grandmother," replied Miss Mizy.

"Sister," cried the laird, "gang and tell her to come but to see my leddy."

"Ye ken," said Miss Mizy, winking to her brother, "that she cannot with propriety leave our guests by themselves."

"What for no? Surely we're no to stand on such pernicketies wi' the like o' Martha Docken and her oye."

The earl and countess exchanged looks with Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret.

But his lordship in a moment said, "I beg you will not request Miss Cunningham to leave your friends. Sir Andrew Wylie is a person of such personal worth that neither Lady Sandyford nor I could possibly allow ourselves to be the cause of anything towards him that might be construed into a want of due consideration for his high character and extraordinary talents."

The laird did not very well understand this, nor what answer to make to the earl; but he was relieved from his embarrassment by Sir Archibald saying, "It was our intention to have paid our respects to the baronet, and to invite him to dine at Auchinward to-morrow, where perhaps, Craiglands, you will do us the favour to accompany him."

Lady Margaret at the same time addressed herself to Miss Mizy, and expressed her hope that she was not engaged, and would, with Miss Cunningham, be of the party. Miss Mizy at once accepted the invitation; but the laird was not

altogether pleased to find our hero considered so much on an equality with himself, and seemed reluctant to consent.

"Ye maun excuse me the morn, Sir Archibald," said he, "for it's no vera convenient to me just at this juncture."

The earl, suspecting the motive of the laird's hesitation, said adroitly to the countess, "If Mr Cunningham cannot come, it will be unnecessary to send the carriage for Sir Andrew, as the ladies will perhaps bring the baronet with them."

Miss Mizy, who, from the time she had been conciliated by our hero in London, considered him in a favourable light, was not, however, prepared to go such lengths at once as this, and with considerable dexterity replied, addressing Sir Archibald, "My brother will see how he is the morn, and if the weather's good, he'll maybe come with us."

The visitors were at no loss to ascribe this evasion to the proper motive. But Miss Mizy was not allowed to get off so easily; for Lady Margaret said to the countess, "You had still as well send your coach. It will bring the whole party; and perhaps Miss Mizy, in that case, will have the kindness to make my compliments to the baronet's grandmother, and say I shall be happy to see her along with them."

The laird and his sister were equally confounded, and knew not well what answer to make, when the earl said, "I think, as Sir

Andrew and the old lady are in the house, the business should be settled at once."

"Leddy! Martha Docken a leddy!" thought Craiglands to himself.

"Leddy! Martha Docken a leddy!" thought Miss Mizy also. But the current into which their wandering thoughts were running was stopped by Sir Archibald asking the earl if his lordship could use the freedom with his friend the baronet to disturb him while at dinner, for otherwise the object of their drive to Stoneyholm would be frustrated. This reminded Lord Sandyford that they had drawn the laird and Miss Mizy from the table, and with his most gracious and conciliatory manner he expressed his regret to have been the cause of disturbing them. He then turned to Sir Archibald, and with the best look and voice of sincerity that he could assume, added, "Although my friend, Sir Andrew, is one of the best-humoured men living, yet, considering the distinction and deference to which he is accustomed, I should almost hesitate to take so great a liberty. But perhaps this lady," said his lordship, turning to Miss Mizy, "will take the trouble (merely in an incidental manner) to let him know that Lady Sandyford is in the house. He will come at once, I know, to see her ladyship."

It was with some difficulty that the countess and Lady Margaret could preserve their gravity at seeing the vacant astonishment with which the

laird and his sister exchanged looks, on hearing Martha Docken's grandson spoken of by an earl with such consideration.

Miss Mizy, however, without saying a word, rose, and going into the dining-room, told the baronet, with a degree of diffidence which even old Martha herself observed, that Lord and Lady Sandyford were in the drawing-room, with Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret Maybole, who were desirous of being introduced to him.

Our hero, who was amused by the change in Miss Mizy's deportment, instantly rose, and joined the party in the drawing-room, from which he returned in the course of a few minutes, and said to Mary, "Miss Cunningham, you must grant me a favour. The Countess of Sandyford wishes to be introduced to you. Allow me to lead you to her leddyship."

Mary rose instinctively, and Sir Andrew, in the moment forgetting that he had as far as possible resumed his rustic manners, led her away by the hand, to the utter amazement of his grandmother, while Miss Mizy followed, leaving the old woman alone. Her surprise, however, was nothing to that of the laird, when he saw them enter together; and especially when, after leading Mary to the countess, the earl introduced the baronet to Sir Archibald as his most particular and esteemed friend, and the person to whom, of all others, he considered himself under the greatest obligations. Lady Margaret was then introduced

to him by Sir Archibald, when she expressed her wish that he would bring his grandmother with him to dinner next day.

"That I fear will not be in my power," was the reply. "She is an old woman, with very just and discreet notions of her condition, and I would be sorry to put her out of her own way; but of the honour, Leddy Margaret, I am very deeply sensible."

It was then arranged that Lord Sandyford's carriage should be sent over next day to Stoneyholm for Sir Andrew and the Craiglands family, and the visitors soon after retired. The earl proposed to the countess, before quitting the house, that they should be introduced to "the old lady;" but Sir Andrew interfered. "Not yet," said he. "It is necessary that I should prepare her in some degree for the honour you intend." And in saying these words, he handed her ladyship to the carriage.

On returning into the house, he accompanied the laird and the two ladies back to the dining-room, where Craiglands endeavoured against the grain to rouse himself into some feeling of deference and respect.

Nothing further of any consequence took place that afternoon. The baronet tried to entertain the laird by answering, as circumstantially as possible, his manifold inquiries respecting London, and seemed in some degree to gain upon his good-will; but there was a visible restraint on

the whole party, and neither seemed to feel quite at ease. Miss Mizy was disconcerted; for she felt the consideration which her noble visitors had shown towards her guests as a tacit reproof to her own deficiency. Old Martha was evidently out of her element; and Mary Cunningham was sometimes absent and thoughtful, wondering in her own mind what was to be the issue of all the singular interest which the return of Wheelie seemed to excite.

CHAPTER XCIII

Cripple Janet.

IN the twilight Andrew walked home with his grandmother to her cottage, where he had invited the master to supper. As they were slowly plodding from the Craiglands gate to the village, the old woman, reverting to the occurrences of the day, exhorted him no to be lifted up, but to be of a lowly heart, and to walk soberly, and keep a steady hand, that he might be able "to carry the cup which the Lord had filled to overflowing. I never expected to live to see the day when I should sit down with you at Craiglands' table, and be treated on a footing with the family." But the baronet's mind was intent on other things, and much of her pious admonitions was heard unheeded, and left no trace behind.

As they approached the door of her humble dwelling, he observed an old woman with a staff in her hand sitting on the low dry stone wall which connected the cottage with its neighbour. She was in Sabbath cleanness, but her apparel was old and tattered; nevertheless, it presented some of the relics of better days. She wore a

small black silk bonnet, embrowned with the sunshine of many summers; her cloak, which had once been scarlet, was changed into a dingy crimson, tattered and patched in several places, and her check apron, neat from the fold, was ragged, and old, and very mean.

When our hero and old Martha drew near, the modest beggar turned aside her face, as if ashamed that Sir Andrew should recognise her, while the place she had chosen showed that she was there patiently waiting his return home.

"Ye maun gie her saxpence, I'se warrant, Andrew," said Martha, on observing her, "for auld lang syne. Poor body, she's noo greatly fail't. In her needcessity she was obligated to sell her wheel; indeed it was nae langer of ony use to her, for she had got an income[1] in the right arm, and couldna spin."

"Who is't?" said the baronet, roused from his reverie by the observations of his grandmother.

"Poor cripple Janet, ye ken. Do ye no mind how you and Charlie Pierston keepit a stand wi' her at Kilwinning Fair? Mony a blithe night you and him had at her fireside, for she was aye kind to a' the laddies."

Sir Andrew felt a pang of inexpressible sorrow quiver through his heart at seeing the old woman in a state of beggary; but instead of giving her a sixpence, he went up to her, and shook her kindly by the hand. "It's a lang time, Janet,

[1] *Income.* Abscess. Here, probably, "infirmity."

since you and me were marrows[1] in the stand at the Fair," said he; "but I have had a better trade by the hand, and ye shall be nane the waur o't. Grannie here tells me ye're no so able to work as ye were in yon days. I'm really sorry that I didna hear o' this sooner, but I'll try to mak' up for't; only, I think you might hae gart[2] the master drop me a line before it came to this."

Janet took up the tail of her apron, and wiping her eyes, which his kindness had made to overflow, said, "I couldna think o' fashing you; and I had a hope that it would hae pleased the Lord to take me to Himsel' before it was His will, for my good hereafter, to bend me down to seek an almous[3] frae onybody. But I couldna help it: auld age and an aching arm soon made my bit bield toom o' plenishing;[4] and when a' was gone, what could I do, for I could neither work nor want?"

"'Deed, Janet," replied Martha, "nobody says or thinks that it was idleset[5] which brought you to the loan; for we a' ken it was a sore night that, afore ye could bring your mind to gang out in the morning. Many a saut tear and heavy heart was in the clachan that day, at the sight of one that had so long ettled to keep up an

[1] *Marrows.* Partners.

[2] *Gart.* Caused.

[3] *An almous.* Alms.

[4] *My bit bield . . . plenishing.* My bit house empty of furniture.

[5] *Idleset.* Idle disposition.

appearance at last obliged to go from door to door. But, Janet, Andrew will do something for you, and I'm blithe to say it's in his power, as I hope he'll no lack of the inclination."

"Noo that I hae got the better o' the shame," replied the poor old creature, "I maun just warsle on.[1] The neighbours are a' as kind to me as they can afford; I only trust that the Lord will no leave me to grow bedrid—that's noo a' in this world that I fear."

"But if He should," replied our hero cheeringly, "He'll send some kindly hand to help you."

"Ay, so I thought ance," said Janet, "and so I would fain hope still, for He has been gracious to me even in beggary, disposing the hearts of everybody to compassion and sympathy; but when Mrs Pierston gaed away frae the Woodside to live in Glasgow, I lost a good friend: she would ne'er hae alloo't me to die in neglect. Howsever, poor leddy, she had her ain trials; for your old companion Charlie, her son, perished the pack, and they say has spoused his fortune and gone to Indy. I'm sure, gang where he will, a blessing will attend him, for he had a leal heart; and I hae a notion that mine wasna the sairest in the parish when we heard of his ganging abroad; for ever since Miss Mary Cunningham kent that it was me that keepit the stand at the fair for you and him, she's been aye kinder and kinder, and her and me has mony a crack about

[1] *Warsle on.* Struggle on.

you and him, when I gang on the Saturdays to The Place."

"They would hae been a braw couple," said our hero's grandmother; "and I ne'er heard till noo a right because for Miss Mary being so skeigh to a' her other joes.[1]"

Andrew was not entirely pleased with this information, for although persuaded that no attachment had existed on the part of Pierston, it was possible that Mary Cunningham might have cherished some early affection for him; and he was on the point of turning away, in the absence of the moment produced by the remark of the old woman, when his grandmother again reminded him to give Janet something. Ashamed of his inattention, he immediately said, "No; my auld co-partner maunna receive sic gifts ony mair. Janet, ye'll come hame and tak' your supper wi' us; and as the maister's to be there, we'll consult wi' him what's best to be done for you."

"Na, na," exclaimed the poor old woman, bursting suddenly into tears, "I'll no do that; I canna noo sit down on an equality wi' onybody that I hae fashed for alms. I'll no disgrace neither you nor your grandmother wi' my company; but whatsoever you and the master are

[1] *A right because . . . joes.* A right reason . . . being so disdainful to all her other wooers.

"Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Looked asklent and unco skeigh."
(*Duncan Gray*).—BURNS.

content to do for me, I'll tak' in thankfulness. It has pleased the Lord to chastise me with the humiliation of beggary, and I'm resigned to His will. I would fain hope, however, that He'll no just carry His righteous dispensation so far as to leave me to perish like a dog at a dyke-side—that's noo a' my anxiety."

The baronet was deeply affected by the lowliness of this burst of affliction, and the honest sense of pride that it breathed.

Martha again assured the mendicant that she would be taken care of. "Though it werena in the power of Andrew," said she, "to do the needful, there's mony kindly neighbours, Janet, that respect you; and we a' think that what has been your case may be our ain. So ye shouldna be just so cast down, but come away and tak' a bit of our supper."

"No the night," replied Janet, drying her eyes—"no the night;" and rising from the wall on which she had been resting, she moved to go homeward, which was in a different direction from that of Martha's cottage.

Our hero then gave her what silver he had about him, saying, "Tak' that, Janet, for arles[1] of something better; and be sure and come to grannie's in the morning."

The unhappy creature could not speak, but grasped his hands in both hers, and watered them with the tears of her gratitude.

[1] *Arles.* Earnest. Note B.

CHAPTER XCIV

The Fireside.

IN the meantime, the Craiglands family were discussing the events of the day; and the laird was not the least dogmatical of the group, although, perhaps, not the wisest.

"I dinna understand," said he, "a' this wark about Martha Docken's oye. That English lord and his leddy mak' him joke-fellow[1] wi' themselves; but the Englishers, as it is weel known, are no overladen with discretion—that's a certain fact. But how Andrew came to the degree of a bauronet is a thing I would fain hear the rights o'. Howsever, I'm thinking that your bauronets noo-a-days are but, as a body would say, the scum that's cast uppermost in times o' war and trouble."

"Ay, but, brother," said Miss Mizy, "Sir Andrew's a great and wealthy man, and a member of Parliament; and ye hae heard how Mary and me found him on a footing with the Duchess of Dashingwell and a' the nobility, which was just confounding."

[1] *Joke-fellow.* An intimate.

"Ye have said sae," replied the laird; "but everybody kens that duchesses, especially o' the English breed, are nae better than they should be."

"But you forget, sir," interposed Mary, "that Lady Margaret is sister-in-law to her grace; and when she gave us letters to the duchess, she not only assured us that she was a lady of unblemished honour, but beloved and esteemed by all her friends."

"Ye wouldna surely hae had Leddy Margaret," said the laird, "to speak ill of her ain kith and kin."

"But Sir Andrew," resumed Miss Mizy, "has made a great fortune, and has bought the estate of Wylie."

"Is't paid for?" interrupted the laird. "I would like to ken that."

"I should think," said Mary diffidently, "that he must be a man of merit and ability; for you know, sir, that he had but his own conduct for his patron, and he has acquired both riches and honour."

"But how did he acquire them?" cried the laird sharply. "Anybody may acquire riches and honour!—the road is open baith to gentle and semple. But, thanks be and praise, the democraws are no just able yet to mak' themselves men o' family."

"It is not likely that Sir Andrew is a democrat; neither his associates nor his inclinations,

or I am much mistaken," replied Mary, "lie that way."

"Wha made you a judge?" exclaimed the laird.

"I do not affect any judgment in the matter," was the answer; "I only think——"

"What business hae ye to think? Is't not as clear as a pike-staff that trade and traffic are to be the ruin o' this country. In a few years, it's my opinion, there'll no be sic a thing as a gentleman. There's that poor mean-spirited body Monkgreen, wha was aye ettling to improve and improve his lands like a common farmer, and wha cut down the fine auld trees o' his grandfather's planting, and set up his sons as Glasgow merchants:—What has he made o't? His auld son, Robin, they say, stands behint a counter gieing out wabs to tambourers. Willy, the second, is awa' wi' a pack among the niggers to the West Indies; and his only dochter, she's drawn up wi' a manufacturer, which in broad Scotch means just a weaver. In another generation, a' that we'll hear o' the auld respectit family of Monkgreen will be something about a sowan-cog[1] or a sugar-hoggit. I wouldna be surprised to see a clecking o' blackent weans coming hame frae Jamaica, crying 'Massa granpa' to Monkgreen, yet, before he died. It's a judgment he weel deserves."

[1] *A sowan-cog.* A dish for holding sowans, from which weavers made paste for stiffening their yarn. Hence "sowan-cog" and "sowan-mug," contemptuous terms for a weaver.

"I am surprised, my dear father, that you entertain such prejudices against those who rise in the world by their talents and merits. The founders of all families must have sprung originally from the people," said Mary, with a persuasive accent.

"True, Mary, my dear—that's very true," replied the laird; "but there's some difference between a family come of the sword, and ane o' the shuttle."

"Ay, brother; but Sir Andrew Wylie's no frae the loom, but the law," said Miss Mizy.

"That's ten times waur," cried the laird. "Everybody kens that lawyer is just another name for cheater. Wasna I obligated to pay James Gottera seventeen pounds odd shillings for outlay, and the price of the cow that happened to die, by me accidentally poking my stick in her e'e when she was riving down the hedge? Was there ever such injustice heard o'?—and that came o' the law."

"I doubt, sir," said Mary, "that with these sentiments you and the baronet are not likely to become very intimate."

"Bauronet! Bauronet! What gars the lassie aye cast up that bauronet to me? I dinna like to hear sic havers. Bauronet! Set him up and shuve him forward. Martha Docken's oye a bauronet!"

The conversation continued in this strain for some time, till Miss Mizy again reminded her

brother that Sir Andrew had bought the Wylie estate. "They say," said she, "that he paid mair than thirty thousand pounds for't."

"Barrow't money! Barrow't money!" exclaimed the laird. "What's to hinder folk frae buying estates with heritable bonds?"

"But the baronet——" Mary was proceeding to say, when her father interrupted her peevishly.

"Bauronet again! Wilt t'ou ne'er devald[1] with that baroneting? Tak' him to you and his bauronetcy."

"I'm sure she may get far waur," replied Miss Mizy; "for he's a sensible man, and ye saw how he was deferred to by the lord and his leddy, and how Sir Archibald and Leddy Margaret made o' him."

"They hae their ain ends for that," retorted the laird.

"Ends! What ends?" cried Miss Mizy, raising her voice.

"Ends here or ends there," replied the laird doggedly, "it's time to end this clishmaclaver. I want to hear nae mair o't; so dinna fash me." And with that he leant his head aside on his easy-chair, and seemingly fell asleep.

"I wonder," said Mary in a suppressed voice to her aunt, "what can make my father cherish such antipathy against Sir Andrew?"

"It's no so muckle against him, as it's against the new-made gentry in general," said Miss Mizy.

[1] *Devald.* Cease.

"I'm no sleeping," said the laird, by way of admonishing them to refrain from the subject; and raising himself, he added, "I have been thinking on what we were discoursing about; and, sister, if Sir Andrew mak's a proposal to you, I'll no object to the match."

"Me!" exclaimed the elderly maiden. "Proposals to me!"

Mary laughed, and said, "How do you imagine, sir, that he has any such intention?"

"I saw wi' the tail o' my e'e that he was unco couthy[1] with her mair than ance."

"Brother," replied Miss Mizy, "how can sic an absurdity enter your head?"

"Then what the deevil mak's you sae hyte[2] about the fellow?" cried the laird. "But we'll see what's to happen. A' I can say is, I'll no object; for really, sister, ye hae nae time to spare." And, chuckling with delight at this brilliant sally, the laird rose, and lifting one of the candles, left the ladies for some time to discuss the subject by themselves.

[1] *Couthy.* Comfortable, in the sense of "on affectionate terms with." See use on page 262.

[2] *Hyte.* Keen.

CHAPTER XCV

A Serving Lass.

THE maid-servant who looked into the dining-room to tell Miss Cunningham of Lord and Lady Sandyford was no ordinary character in her walk of life. Except once, to see the draught race on the Saturday of Marymas Fair at Irvine, she had never been out of the jurisdiction of the parish of Stoneyholm. In her appearance she was, even for her condition, uncommonly rustic; but random gleams of shrewdness and intelligence occasionally showed that she was not altogether the simpleton which her acquaintance in general thought. Her father was the parish beadle (or betheral, as that dignitary is called in Scotland), and, in addition to the wonted duties of his office, followed as a profession the calling of a weaver.

While she was a little girl running about the doors, Mr Tannyhill happened to be pleased with some whimsical trait in her playfulness, and took her under his own particular care, not only teaching her all the little that he commonly taught the other children, but, finding her apt, and possessed of a taste for reading, instructing her

in the Latin language, and in time producing what he considered a most accomplished classical scholar. Bell Lampit, however, acquired no blue-stocking airs: she grew up to womanhood unconscious of any superior attainments, and was not distinguished from her companions otherwise than by being perhaps a little less attentive to dress.

About the age of eighteen, she was hired into the Craiglands family as an under-housemaid; and she might, at the period of which we are now speaking, be described as a queer-looking girl, with ragged locks, long red legs, a short jupe,[1] and a merry eye. In the capacity of a servant, however, the advantages of the education which the master had conferred were soon manifested in various ways. Instead of singing melodious ditties, like her companions, to cheer the tasks of household drudgery, Bell commonly repeated aloud to herself the choicest passages of the English and classic poets; and it was not uncommon to hear her, in bottling small beer, joyously recite, as she turned the cock, some social verse from Anacreon or Horace. One forenoon, a short time before Sir Andrew's return, when we happened to call at The Place, and were induced by the laird to stay dinner, we heard her, as she picked a fowl that was put to death on our account, declaim, with good emphasis, the whole of Dryden's ode. Suiting the action to the word, she tore the feathers with

[1] *Jupe.* Petticoat.

appropriate unison to the varied enthusiasm of the poetry; nor would it be easy to imagine a finer burst of fervour than the energy with which she flourished the hen by the legs round her head, as she exclaimed,

"And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder!"

But for all this, her merits as a housemaid were not of a high order; on the contrary, when we expressed our admiration of her accomplishments to Miss Mizy, that thrifty lady declared she was "a glaikit and neglectfu' tawpy,[1] that couldna be trusted to soop the house, if a book or a ballad was left in her way."

Among other endowments, Bell enjoyed from nature an irresistible propensity to communicate to others some account of whatever she heard or saw. Lord and Lady Sandyford's visit, with the consideration in which it was understood they treated Sir Andrew, sent her cackling to the village, as soon as she obtained Miss Mizy's permission to go out, on the wonted pretext of every maid-servant's Sunday-evening excursions, both in town and country,—that is, to see her parents. And about the time that our hero and his grandmother were conversing with cripple Janet, she was expatiating with all the elocution of her nature to a numerous assemblage of the villagers on the events which had that day taken place at the Craiglands.

[1] *Glaikit . . . tawpy.* Good-for-nothing . . . sloven.

The result of her narrative did credit to the sagacity of her auditors, for they came to the unanimous conclusion that Sir Andrew and Miss Mary would be speedily married, as they were, no doubt, betrothed to each other from the time that the young lady, with her aunt, had visited London. This idea was, in part, suggested by some observations which the erudite Bell had made while assisting Robin Taigle to serve the table during dinner. But although it was in so far her own suggestion, it yet, nevertheless, operated upon her with the force of a new impetus, and she could no more refrain from indulging herself in the delight of being the first to tell the news to her fellow-servants than in the other case she could withstand her propensity to inform her parents and the neighbours of every circumstance that she had seen or guessed respecting the visit of the English lord and his lady.

It happened, however, that Bell, in her eagerness to be delivered of the tidings with which her fancy was so big, rushing brimful into the servants' hall, did not observe that Miss Mizy was there inspecting a closet with a candle.

"Oh, what will I tell you a'!" was her exclamation. "Sir Andrew's come down from London to be married to our Miss Mary."

"What's t'ou saying, Bell?" cried Miss Mizy, starting from the closet, and blowing out the candle as she set it down on the table.

"'Deed, mistress, it's a' the clatter of the town. What a' say maun be true," was the reply.

With whatever sensations Miss Mizy received this information she said nothing to the servants, but went immediately to the dining-room, where the laird was sitting asleep in his easy-chair, while Miss Mary was reading aloud to him one of Blair's sermons.

"Mary, what do ye think that haverel jillet,[1] Bell Lampit, has heard in the clachan?" said Miss Mizy, in a sort of exulting whisper.

Mary shut the book, and the laird turned his head to the other side of the easy-chair, as if in his slumber he sought the sound which had lulled him asleep.

"How should I know?" replied the young lady, somewhat surprised at the spirits into which the news seemed to have raised her aunt.

"They say ye're to be married to Sir Andrew!" exclaimed Miss Mizy, lifting her hands in token of the admiration with which she enjoyed the intelligence, and the triumph which it gave her over her niece, who had so often slighted her prognostications with respect to his grandeur and greatness.

Mary laughed, and said, "I should not wonder if the story has taken its rise from daft Jamie, who, in the fulness of his heart for the sixpence he got from Sir Andrew, advised me to marry him."

But her mirth was not so deep as her heart,

[1] *Haverel jillet.* Senseless, giddy girl.

and she experienced the influence of a strange presentiment thrill through all its pulses, in connection with a sudden rush into her fancy of every incident associated in her recollection with the image of our hero.

"I wonder what your father will say till't?" cried Miss Mizy; and she moved round towards the easy-chair for the purpose of rousing the laird.

But Mary interposed, saying, "I am surprised that you should be so taken up with this nonsense. I beg you won't disturb my father—consider his prejudices. It will only vex him to suppose such a thing possible."

"Possible!" exclaimed Miss Mizy; "my lass, ye may be thankfu' if ye'll get the offer to be the lady of that Ilk! Na, na, Mary, it's not to be expectit that a baronet, hand and glove wi' lords and duchesses yonder, will come frae London to speer your price."

"I am astonished to hear you speak so lightly of such a thing," replied Miss Cunningham; "for I am persuaded that if the creature Wheelie were to offer, there is not one in the world would be more disposed to send him off with a short answer than yourself."

"It's my fear he'll no try," was the tartish answer of the old lady; "so ye needna, Mary Cunningham, gie yoursel' sic airs, and ca' the grapes sour that ye canna reach, like the tod[1] in

[1] *Tod.* Fox.

Esop's fable. So I will tell your father, for it's but right and proper to prepare him for the news."

Mary made no answer, but rising abruptly, suddenly quitted the room, while Miss Mizy, going round to the easy-chair, shook the laird awake.

CHAPTER XCVI

A Debate.

SISTER," said the laird, rubbing his eyes as Miss Mizy disturbed his slumber, "what for will ye no let a body sleep? Ye ne'er devald, wi' ae thing or another, frae keeping me in het water."

"I wonder how ye can think o' dozing at that gait; it's enough to turn your brains to oil," replied his sister. "But there's great news in the town."

"Ay, and what are they? Is Boney put out o' the way at last?" said Craiglands, rousing himself into as much life as possible.

"It's something far more extraordinar," replied Miss Mizy, "and what I'm no thinking ye'll be so well pleased to hear."

"How do ye ken whether I'll be weel or ill pleased?" retorted the laird peevishly. "It's an unco thing that ye maun aye be argol-bargoling[1] wi' me in that gait. I can get nae rest for you by night or by day."

[1] *Argol-bargoling.* Bandying words.

"I ken very weel," in a tone quite as sharp, was Miss Mizy's answer, "and everybody kens that that kens you."

"Everybody kens, Miss Mizy, that thou's a cankery[1] creature, and that had thou no been sae, I might hae been quit o' thee lang syne; but nae fool cast up that would be fashed wi' thee."

"Weel, weel, may be ye'll no be muckle langer plagued wi' me; for if the news are true that I have heard, I'll soon hae a better steading for mysel'."

"Thae maun be great news, indeed," said the laird, with an accent approaching to the tone of wonder. "And what are they? It maun be an ill wind to somebody that will blaw sic good to the Craiglands."

"An ye will hae't, ye shall hae't," retorted the justly offended gentlewoman. "They say Sir Andrew and your dochter's to be married."

"Wha dares to say the like o' that?" cried the laird.

"There noo! Ye see what I foretold's come to pass," exclaimed Miss Mizy. "Didna I tell you that the tidings boded nae daffin' to you?"

"And how do you know whether they bode daffin' or dule?" replied Craiglands, a little taken aback. "A' that I can say is that I dinna believe ae word o't."

1 *Cankery.* Cross-grained.

"It's very little to the purpose whether ye believe it or no; but if the marriage is to be, what will ye say till't?" rejoined Miss Mizy.

"I'm sure it would be a kittle question for me to answer," retorted the laird, "gin there was ony sic benison in the bargain as a clear house o' thee. But it's no a thing of ony sort o' probability at a', and Mary Cunningham would ne'er tryst hersel' without my connivance."

"As for that," cried Miss Mizy, triumphing in the commotion which the news had evidently raised in her brother's mind, "she's her father's ain bairn, a chip o' the auld block; and it's my opinion that, were Sir Andrew really to make an offer, she would refuse him, out of the contrarie spirit that she inherits frae—I'll no say wha."

"Mizy, thou hadst ne'er a gude word o' onybody," replied the laird; "and it says but little for thee to misliken thy ain niece, who is baith a gude-tempered and an obedient lassie,—twa things that ne'er could be said o' that side o' the house that ye're come o'."

"Weel, haud your ain part gude, brother; but unless I'm far wrang," was the lady's emphatic reply, "ye'll maybe find, if the matter comes to a trial, wha's in the right."

The laird, instead of responding, stretched out his hand, and taking his staff, which stood at his side, knocked sharply on the floor.

"What do you want?" inquired his sister.

But, instead of answering her question, he

repeated the knocking, and Robin Taigle appeared to his summons.

"Gar ane o' the lasses," said his master, "tell my dochter to step this way."

"What do you want wi' her?" exclaimed Miss Mizy.

"I'm her father, and it's none of your business, for ye're but her aunty—mind that."

Robin having retired, in the course of about a minute after, the shrill tongue of Bell Lampit was heard crying at the foot of the stair, "Hey, Miss Mary, come down and pacify the laird, for he's wud wi' Miss Mizy."

"The de'il do me guid o' that tawpy!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "I wonder how I hae been able to thole her sae long; she would have skreighed in the same fool fashion, an the house had been fu' o' strangers. Bell Lampit, ye limmer, wha taught you to speak in that disrespectfu' way o' me?"

Bell, on hearing herself named, opened the dining-room door, and looking in from behind it, said, "What's your wull, maister?"

"That's my wull," cried the laird, and he flung the staff at her head. "There ne'er surely was a poor man driven so demented as I am by a wheen[1] idiot women."

Miss Cunningham, on hearing herself summoned, immediately came downstairs, and the moment she entered the room, her father said,

[1] *Wheen.* A parcel of.

in a soothing and coaxing manner, "Mary, my love, this misleart aunty of yours has been garring me trow that ye're a cross-grained ettercap[1] like hersel', and in no ae thing will do my bidding, and I were ne'er so urgent!"

"I trust and hope that it is not your disposition, sir," replied Mary, "to ask of me anything so unreasonable as that I should refuse."

"That's a leddy!" exclaimed the laird. "Noo, Mizy, what do you say to that? Is there ony contrarie spirit there?"

"But ye havena tried her?" exclaimed the aunt, anticipating an entire confirmation of her opinion. "See if she'll consent to marry Sir Andrew Wylie; try her wi' that, brother?"

"I think," said Mary, a little fervently, "it will be time enough when Sir Andrew requests him."

"Vera right, Mary—a sensible observe," was the laird's answer. "We'll gut nae fish till we get them; and I hope your aunty will tak' warning after this night, and no molest me wi' her sedition. But noo that we hae come to a right understanding, I would like to ken how the clash has risen?"

Miss Cunningham herself had a little curiosity on the subject as well as her father; for although she considered daft Jamie as the original author, she had a feminine inclination to know the particulars of all that was reported. Accordingly, after some brief consultation, it was resolved that

[1] *Ettercap.* A spider; then, a fiery fellow.

Bell Lampit should be called in and examined. The laird's stick was still lying on the floor, when Bell, on being summoned, entered, and she lifted it up, and held it out to him by the end, with a gawky look of trepidation.

"What's this, Bell," said her master, setting the stick in its wonted place, "that ye hae brought from the clachan the night?"

"I brought naething, sir," replied Bell, with the most perfect and sincere simplicity.

"Ca' ye't naething to be raising a rippet[1] in the house about Sir Andrew Wylie and Miss Cunningham?" exclaimed Miss Mizy. "The laird wants to ken what is't that ye hae heard."

"Oh, just a wheen havers, Miss Mizy—just a wheen havers!" replied Bell. "Causey talk—Vox populi!"

"Vox deevils!" cried the laird. "But what do they say?"

"That Sir Andrew would hae been married to Miss Mary lang ago; but ye wouldna part wi' her tocher till he could count pound and pound wi' you twice o'er," replied Bell.

"It's a confounded lee!" exclaimed the laird indignantly, while both Miss Mizy and Mary laughed.

"I said it was a lee," replied Bell; "and some thought it wasna come to pass that ye would ever consent to let Miss Mary tak' him, though he had the main's more."[2]

[1] *Rippet.* Uproar. [2] *Main's more.* The wish.

"Wha thought sae? and what business had they to be making or meddling in the matter?" cried the laird.

"'Deed, sir," said Bell, "I said that I didna think Miss Mary would ever tak' sic a teetotum as Wheelie."

"And wha the deevil speer't your counsel anent it?" exclaimed the laird. "Ye bardy loon,[1] gae but the house and mind your wark. Ye thought and they thought; but if it wasna mair for ae thing than another, I hae a thought that would gar baith you and them claw whar it's no yeuky."[2]

"Bell, leave the room," said Mary; and she added to her father, "You have judged very properly, sir. It is not right to allow servants to speak so familiarly. Her remark on Sir Andrew's appearance was highly unbecoming."

"She's a half-witted creature," replied the laird, restored to his wonted composure. "Sir Andrew, in my opinion, is a very decent man of his stature."

"He's a very sensible man, which is mair to the purpose," rejoined Miss Mizy.

"What ken you about sense, Mizy? Hegh, woman, but ye hae made a poor show o' yours this night," said the laird exultingly; and he continued, "Come, Mary, my dawty, lend me your arm, and help me up the stair to my room. Gude-night, Mizy; and the next time ye prog-

[1] *Bardy loon.* Bold, forward lass. [2] *Yeuky.* Itchy.

nosticate, I redd you to look better at the almanac."

In saying these words, he broke out into one of his loudest and longest guffaws, at the conclusion of which, leaning on his daughter's arm, he left the room.

CHAPTER XCVII

A Dream.

WHEN our hero retired for the night to the small chamber which had been constructed at the back of his grandmother's cottage, he sat down and ruminated on the events of the day. A large predominance of pleasure had undoubtedly been enjoyed; but the comment of Cripple Janet on the cause of Mary Cunningham's kindness to her threw long and wavering shadows of doubt and apprehension over the hopes which the incidents in other respects had unfolded. It seemed to him that although he had reached the table-land of fortune, there was a deep and dark ravine between him and the desired object of his perseverance and pursuit. He had been hitherto engaged with affairs wherein his own passions had no concern, and no obstacle had impeded his career, or taught him to apprehend that he might not reach the goal of his ambition. While he therefore acknowledged that in all external circumstances he had been enabled to surpass even his wishes, he could not disguise from himself that there are aims in life of more difficult

attainment than even riches and honours. He felt that there was an immeasurable difference between the disinterested dictates of gratitude and the desires and sentiments which spring from passion. In the affair of Lord and Lady Sandyford he was free and decisive; but in seeking the consummation of his own happiness, doubts and diffidence paralysed his resolution. It seemed to him that in his own case comparatively nothing depended on himself, and everything on the acquiescence of another's will and affections.

"If," said he to himself, as he sat on the bedside, "Mary Cunningham had been a' this time thinking only on Charlie Pierston, I wish I had kent it before he went to Indy, for I think it would have been a pleasure to have helped them to happiness; and I had no need to be gripping and gathering in the way I have done, had it no been to make myself a stair to mount to an equality with her. 'To make the crown a pound young Jamie gaed to sea.' But, after all, Robin Gray got Jenny. Weel, I canna help it. But ae thing I can do—I can prove that I wasna unworthy of her love. I'll try the morn's morning to discover how her mind lies, and if she prefers Charlie, I'll write to him to come hame, and I'll gie him the estate o' Wylie to mak a kirk and a mill o't wi' her. For I'll no fash mysel' ony mair wi' this world's pelf and blathrie o't."

With this determination he began to undress,

but in the course of a few seconds he forgot himself, and again sat down, saying—

"Surely Mary Cunningham's no the only ane that I might think of. I wonder how it is that I had fancied her so long. She's neither so bonny nor so blithesome as fifty others I hae seen! I have been just the fool of that calf-love, bred o' the fifty psalms and the headstane. I wouldna be surprised to hear she made me the laughing-stock o' a' her acquaintance, for she was just a deevil for making diversion o' me among them lang syne. No: it canna be that she has any notion o' Charlie—he, I'm sure, had nane o' her—that's a certain thing; for he was a wild ramplor[1] lad, and would ne'er hae run sic ram races had he felt a right true and faithful affection as I did. But what signifies that? It's a' ane to me, if her fancy runs on him, for I'll ne'er take a portion of a divided heart. But the sooner I get to the bottom of this the better."

And with that he undressed, and throwing himself carelessly into bed, all the transactions of his past life floated through his mind in connection with the image of Mary Cunningham, and suddenly the form of Pierston was seen standing near him. He looked at him, and he appeared pale and feeble, and pointing with his hand to a picture, on which appeared the distant view of an Oriental city. In the foreground of the landscape was a cemetery, with several tombs, and on

[1] *Ramplor.* Restless.

one of them he saw the name of Pierston inscribed. In the surprise of the moment, he turned round to ask his friend what it meant. But the morning sun shone brightly in his eyes, and the vision of the picture and of his friend had vanished with his waking.

There was something in the circumstances of this dream which made him averse to sleep again, and having dressed himself, he walked out.

In passing from the village to the high-road, he saw the master before him, walking quickly, with the front of his cocked hat turned backwards, and the back slackened down for a shade to his eyes. Mending his pace, he soon came up to him.

The dominie, on being addressed by the baronet, shortened his steps, and they fell into conversation as they walked together respecting cripple Janet; the result of which was that Sir Andrew was to settle on her a stipend sufficient to keep her comfortable as a boarder with some one of the cottiers. "By which," said the master, "ye'll bespeak twa good words aboon by one good action here; for the stipend will be a help to some other, as well as a consolation to Janet."

By the time they had discussed this arrangement, they arrived at the end of the lane which led from the hamlet to the high-road. It was not our hero's intention to go farther, and he halted, while the master continued to improve his pace.

"Where away so fast?" said the baronet.

"Oh!" replied the master, "I have had great news. A young lad that I kent at the college is come hame from some foreign part; and last night, when I left you, I found a letter from him, sent frae Irvine, bidding me to come and see him at the Crosskeys Inn there this morning. We were great companions when laddies, but I thought he was dead and gane mony a year and day ago; he was a clever chappie, and used to say that if ever he made a fortune he would get me a kirk."

"A kirk!" said the baronet. "I didna know that ye were a preacher."

"Watty Ettle used to say I was a very gude ane; but I had nae freens to help me forward; so what was the use of my preaching?" replied the innocent dominie.

"But are you qualified to accept a living?" exclaimed Sir Andrew, feeling something between pain and pleasure—never before having heard or imagined that Mr Tannyhill possessed any dignity beyond those which he held in the parish of Stoneyholm.

"Ay," replied the master, "I was licensed; but since I preached my first sermon in the Barony Kirk o' Glasgow, I have never had courage to mount another poopit; for, oh! I was terribly frightened that day! When I gave out the first psalm, ye might have heard my heart beating at the far end o' the kirk."

"I'm glad to hear this," said the baronet to himself audibly.

"What for should it make you glad? For it was the breaking of my bread, and made me fain to seek the lowly bield of a parish school, where, for more than five-and-twenty years, I have been delving sand and washing Ethiopians," replied the mild and modest licentiate in the reproving accent of expostulation.

"My worthy friend," said our hero, "ye cannot think I would hurt your feelings; I was only glad to hear that you are qualified to accept a parish. I think it's no beyond my power to get you one. But go to your old friend, and when you return I'll expect to see you."

The gentle and ingenuous dominie could scarcely comprehend the import of these words, so much did the baronet still appear the simple boy he had known as Wheelie. But after they had separated, he began to reflect on all that had passed; and by the time he reached the minister's carse of Irvine, he had formed a tolerably correct idea in what manner it might be in the power of a baronet and a member of Parliament to procure him a parish.

CHAPTER XCVIII

Pride.

I'M thinking, sister," said Craiglands, when he came downstairs to breakfast, "that it's no just what is proper in our family to gang to Auchinward on a visitation in a barrow't coach. We're bound, out o' a respect to oursel's, to let those Englishers see that we hae coaches of our ain as gude as theirs; so ye'll tell Robin Taigle to put his horses in order for the road, and to snod[1] himsel' for a decency on the present occasion."

Miss Mizy agreed that it would assuredly be more becoming the dignity of the family to go in their own carriage; for, as she very sapiently observed, "although the lord and the lady promised to send the coach for us, there was no word said about sending us back."

Miss Mizy perhaps in this judged of them by herself. Robin Taigle, however, was ordered to get the equipage ready in due time; so that, when Mary entered the room, she was informed of the change made in the arrangement, and that Sir Andrew would have the lord's carriage to himself.

[1] *Snod.* Make himself tidy.

"I'm glad of it," said Mary; "for really after the nonsense we heard last night, I do think we could not go with propriety to Auchinward together. There is no need to countenance the foolish notions which one cannot prevent foolish people from taking into their heads."

Whether any change had taken place during the night in the laird's reflection, or whether, in the debate of the preceding evening, he had been only actuated by his habitual apprehension of Miss Mizy interfering too particularly with those concerns which he considered entirely his own, but which were not the less under her supreme authority, by his so doing, it is certain that in the morning all his family prejudices were as giants refreshed, and that during breakfast he spoke in the most contemptuous manner on the ludicrous idea of Martha Docken's oye being evened to his daughter. Nay, he actually went so far as to joke with Mary on the subject, till he brought the crimson blood into the bloom of her cheeks and the alabaster of her neck and bosom.

"It is," said she, "the most extraordinary thing I ever knew, that, without the slightest reason, such an idea should have arisen. Wheelie,—for truly I can call him by no other name or title,—is very well to laugh with and laugh at. But—" and she paused.

"But what?" cried Miss Mizy, who never gave up her opinion to living mortal; and she added,

"I'm sure he is your equal in consequence ony day. Thir's no the days of antiquity—a baronet's a man of some degree—and, Mary, ye canna disown that he was farther ben among the great than ony other body we met wi' in London. My solid judgment is, and I have had a consideration o' the subject, that Wheelie, whom, by the King's proclamation, we are behadden to call Sir Andrew, is a dungeon o' wit, the like of whilk is no to be met wi' out o' the presence o' the fifteen lords in Edinburgh, and I jalouse there are but few like him even there."

"He may be a great man," replied Mary laughingly, "but he is certainly a wee bodie."

The laird, who was in the act of rapping an egg with a tea-spoon, set both down, and throwing himself back in his chair, laughed immoderately for about a minute, at the end of which he resumed the tea-spoon and the egg as gravely as if he had never been laughing at all.

"Howsever," said the judicious Miss Mizy, "since we're no to go in Lord Sandyford's coach wi' Sir Andrew, I think we should let him know that we go thegither by oursel's in our own carriage."

"Certainly," replied Mary, "it would be exceedingly rude to do otherwise;" and the laird, declaring his abhorrence of all rudeness, especially if there was any chance of it coming to the ears of the Englishers, acquiesced. Bell Lampit was accordingly called in to be instructed in the requisite particulars of a mission to our hero.

"Ye'll gang," said Miss Mizy, "to Martha Docken's, and gie our compliments to Sir Andrew."

"Ye'll do no sic things, Bell!" exclaimed the laird; "ye'll take no compliments from me. That would be to gie the fallow encouragement."

"Bell," interposed Miss Cunningham, "go to Sir Andrew and say that, as my father finds himself well enough to dine at Auchinward today, we shall go with him in our own carriage; so that it will be unnecessary for him to call here for us with Lord Sandyford's."

"It's vera extraordinar," cried Miss Mizy, "that neither the one nor the other of you will allow me to gie the lassie a right instruction. Bell, ye'll gang to Sir Andrew, and say that it's no convenient for us to depend upon any other carriage than our own for the retour at night, so we intend just to gang by oursel's."

"I'm sure," exclaimed the laird, "I see nae need for a' this *pro forma*. I'm no for summering and wintering about the matter."

Bell, being thus instructed, lost no time in proceeding to the village.

In the course of the walk, she ruminated as most maiden ministers do who are entrusted with messages;—perhaps all messengers, male and maiden, do the same. And the result of her cogitations was that the family had resolved to reject Sir Andrew's matrimonial proposal.

Under this impression, on reaching the cottage

door of old Martha, she pulled the latch, and just looking in, as the baronet was sitting at breakfast with his grandmother, said, "Sir Andrew, ye maun find the road to Auchinward by yoursel', for there's nae room for you in our chaise."

"What did ye say, lassie?" replied our hero, partly guessing, but not exactly understanding, the purport of the message.

"Dinna heed the donsie[1] creature," said Martha. "It's the betheral's daft dochter—poor thing, she was a harmless bairn—a wee silly; but the maister taught her Latin, and made her an idiot."

Bell by this time had entered the cottage, and, taking a seat uninvited, began to swing herself backwards and forwards, repeating Jupiter's speech to the gods from Pope's Homer.

"Haud thy tongue, Bell, wi' sic havers, and tell us what thou was saying," said Martha.

"I was saying naething, but only that our folk are a' gaun to Auchinward on their high horses."

"Ay! and what's gart them mount them?" inquired Sir Andrew.

"It's far frae my aught[2] to say," replied Bell; "but I hae a notion they're no overly pleased about something—ye maybe ken what."

"Me!" exclaimed the baronet, and he suddenly checked himself; while Bell, unrequested, began to give his grandmother her own version of what had occurred during the conversation which took

[1] *Donsie.* Silly. [2] *Aught.* Place, right.

place when she received her instructions. But our hero soon cut her short, saying, "Weel, weel, gae away hame, and gie my compliments to the laird, and say that I am glad to hear he is so well this morning, and that I shall have the pleasure of seeing him at Auchinward. And, Bell, as ye hae had some trouble in the business, there's twa shillings to buy a riband."

"Na, na," cried Bell, starting up, and rushing towards the door, "that would be bribery, rank bribery," and she fled from the cottage as fast as her heels could carry her about twenty paces, when, her feminine inclinations overcoming her classical integrity and principles, she returned, and, with a gawky laugh, held out her hand and received the money.

CHAPTER XCIX

Recollections.

SOON after the retreat of Bell Lampit, the master having returned from his visit to his old college companion, came into the cottage. He appeared deeply dejected, and brought in his hand a letter sealed with black, which he laid on the table without speaking, and, sitting down, heaved a profound sigh.

Sir Andrew was in a brown study at the time, reflecting on the communication he had received from the Craiglands, and did not observe the emotion of Mr Tannyhill. But his grandmother said, "What's come ouer you the day, sir? and whar did ye get that letter?"

The affectionate dominie faltered as he replied,

"I hae heard black news. I dinna ken when I met wi' sic a sore stroke. The letter's for Sir Andrew, and I doubt, though he'll hear o' great things in't, it'll gie him but sma' pleasure."

The baronet's attention was roused by this, and he lifted the letter; but, before breaking the seal, he turned round to the master, and inquired how it happened to come into his hands.

"Watty Ettle brought it himsel', and he has come a' the way from London wi' the testament to deliver it into your own hands," said Mr Tannyhill.

"Testament!" cried our hero, with surprise and agitation; and a chill and fearful sentiment passed through his mind, mingled with the remembrance of his dream and of Pierston.

"Poor Charlie's dead!" said the master, with an accent of extreme sorrow.

Sir Andrew laid down the letter unopened, and involuntarily pushing back his chair, exclaimed, "Dead!"

"Ay, he's gone; he died on the wide waters, and his body lies buried in the bottom o' the deep sea. He was seized with some severe ailment; the doctors ordered him to try a change of climate, and he was coming home; but death had laid his bony hand upon him for ever, and wouldna slacken the grim grip. So blithe Charlie is no more. The warm heart is kneaded into cold clay, and the light spirit has departed on the wings of the morning, to that place where there is no separation, nor ither division, but the boundaries of light and love."

Martha, observing the impression which the news had produced on our hero, said, "I dinna wonder, Andrew, that ye're sorry, for ye had many a happy day wi' ane anither, before your young hearts had met wi' onything in the world to make you ken that a' thing in't is hard and rough, and ill to thole."

"Yes," observed the master, taking up the reflection, "we never meet wi' freens like the freens o' our youth, when we hae lost them. I can sympathise wi' Wheelie," said the kind-hearted schoolmaster, forgetting in the moment all the events of the interval which had passed since he had used the epithet,—"for, in my green and glad days, there was a brisk wee laddie that I used to play wi' in the summer sunshine and slide wi' on the winter's ice. The coal was cauld on the hearth of baith our parents, and we were obligated in time to seek our bread in the world. He gaed into Glasgow for his, and was 'prenticed to a wareroom; but still about ance a year we met, and at ilka meeting the covenant o' our young friendship was renewed in our hearts. Belyve,[1] when I had ta'en a turn for divinity, and had gathered, wi' the help o' friends, twa-three pounds to tak me to the College, we lived thegither; our means were sma', and when they were like to wear out I was often very sad; but his spirit was made of light and joy, and he so seasoned our scrimpit meals wi' the happiness of his nature, that I still look back to the penury of the winter we passed thegither as to the holly-bush, wi' its bonny red berries, standing green and bright amidst the snaw. He was a clever and a through-gaun lad, and grew to be a clerk wi' a great merchant, who sent him to a foreign place wi' a rich cargo,

[1] *Belyve.* By-and-by.

in the whilk he was to hae a profit. But when he got there, things werena as he had hoped, and his letters to me were ane after another more and more full of doubts and fears, and at last the merchant got ane that told he was dead. I kenna how it was that at the time I didna experience such a sorrow as I should have felt, and I was vexed when I thought he was dead, and that I should have so little naturality—strangely, at times, fancifying as if he could come back; but in time other cares and concerns grew upon me, and his image, like an epitaph that's overgrown by moss, was in a manner obliterated till many years after, when meeting by chance wi' a gentleman that knew him in that foreign land, we fell into discourse about him, and the stranger told me that he died of a broken heart—all the pride and hopes of his young expectations being blighted by the ill luck of the venture. It's no to be told what I then suffered; I pined, and was solitary, and I couldna eat. I dare say I would soon hae perished with the thought of the blithe Jamie Haddow dying o' despondency but for the freendliness of Watty Ettle, that's brought home from India poor Charlie Pierston's will and testament, leaving you his total heir. That letter's frae him, and he bade me tell you that the legacy is better than twenty thousand pounds."

It was even so. Pierston, according to the advice of his physicians, had been induced to

try the benefits of a voyage from Bengal to the Cape; and, before embarking, made a will by which he bequeathed his whole property to his friend. At the same time, and in the same deed, he recommended to his care a natural child, whom he had named Roderick Random Pierston; adding, "In doing this, I know that I better serve my boy than by leaving him ten times more than all I possess."

We shall not attempt to describe the feelings with which our hero was affected; but as soon as Mr Tannyhill left him to join his little flock in the school, he wrote instructions to Mr Vellum to prepare a trust-deed, by which he assigned the whole of Pierston's property to the boy, the one-half of the amount it might realise to be paid when he reached the age of twenty-one, a fourth on his attaining that of thirty, and the remainder when he reached thirty-five. "For," said the baronet, in the letter to his partner, "if the chap takes after the nature of the father of him, he'll need the bridle."

In the performance of this generous duty, he enjoyed some relief from the effects of the shock he had suffered; and after despatching a boy with the letter to the post-office in Kilwinning, he strolled into the fields with mingled feelings of regret and solicitude respecting the effect which the tidings of Pierston's death would have on Mary Cunningham. Numberless objects, as he sauntered along, reminded him of his deceased

friend, and the sunny hours of their childhood. Heedless of his course, and lost in reverie, he walked as it were involuntarily towards a turn of the road where a large old tree was growing, against which, so entirely was his attention inwardly occupied, he suddenly stumbled; and being roused by the accident, he saw that it was the last of three elms, under the shadow of which he had often played both with Willie Cunningham and Pierston. He looked at it for a moment; and the rush of recollections and of feelings which the sight called forth suffused his heart and his eyes at the moment with tenderness and sorrow.

CHAPTER C

The Grief of Distant Relations.

DURING the time that Sir Andrew was on the road from London with his noble friends, as they travelled leisurely, the news of Pierston's death and the manner in which his fortune was bequeathed had been communicated to his relations in Scotland. His mother being dead several years before, one of his aunts, Miss Peggy Picken, a maiden lady who resided in the Stockwell of Glasgow, was his nearest kin; and although on the maternal side, she was, notwithstanding, firmly persuaded that if there was any justice in law she should have been his rightful heir. Miss Peggy was not in very affluent circumstances, and twenty thousand pounds would have been to her an agreeable acquisition; indeed, for that matter, we should ourselves have no objection, not even in the payment of that most hard tax the legacy-duty, to receive a bequest to only half the amount at any time. Having been educated at the same seminary with the equally accomplished Miss Mizy, they had for more than forty years kept up an occasional correspondence. During the first

fifteen of the period, their letters had been flavoured with many pleasing anticipations, and amiable strictures on certain gentlemen who, one after another, were deluded away from the circles of their haunts by cunning and artificial women, who cajoled them to become their husbands: so that the two interesting spinsters had been most unaccountably left to spend their days in single blessedness. Miss Peggy Picken had been in the practice of occasionally visiting her old friend at the Craiglands, but after Miss Mary returned from Edinburgh she was invited no more, the young lady having strangely fancied that Miss Peggy was making a despairing dead set on her father—a most extraordinary thing in a person come to so many years of discretion—and she alarmed her aunt for the consequences. Still, however, Miss Mizy now and then wrote to her when she required any article of dress from Glasgow, commissions which Miss Peggy was always exceedingly delighted to execute; and, on her part, she had sometimes occasion to thank Miss Mizy for little remunerative presents for agency in the shape of poultry, kits of butter, and Dunlop cheese.

At the juncture of which we are now speaking, Miss Peggy, having occasion to write her old companion, mentioned the death of Pierston, and bitterly complained of the "false," as she called it, "will and testament which the near-be-gaun creature Wylie the lawyer had wheedled him to

make, to the manifest injury of his own kith and kin." No explanatory comment was added to this observation; so that, when Miss Mizy read the letter to Mary and her father, which happened much about the time that our hero had strolled into the fields, the laird expressed himself as perfectly of Miss Peggy Picken's opinion. "No man," said he, "that wasna under the cantrips and delusions of the law would have been guilty of making such an instrument. It's my notion that Miss Peggy should try to get it proven that her nephew was *non compos*, and so break the will. But nae wonder the baronet, as we maun nickname the body, has grown rich. To get silly dying folk in the delirium of a fever to leave us a' their conquest is an easy way to make a fortune."

Miss Mizy partly agreed with her brother that the circumstances of the case ought to be investigated. "For if it could be come at," as she observed, "that there was a secret pact between Charlie Pierston and Sir Andrew before he went to Indy, by the whilk he covenanted to make him his heir, it could neither stand wi' law nor justice that those who had a right to his property should be cut off without a shilling."

Mary said nothing. The subject had thrown her into a pensive mood; and although she remained in the room, she sat silent while her aunt and the laird thus learnedly discussed the case, until, differing upon some legal point, they

came, as usual, to high words, which were, as usual, ended by the laird turning the deaf side of his head towards his sister and affecting to fall asleep.

In the meantime, as Sir Andrew was standing ruminating near the elm-tree, Lord Sandyford's coach, which, according to the arrangement, had been sent to bring the party to Auchinward, came up. The servants on seeing him stopped, and he walked towards it, and was immediately admitted. Absorbed in his reflections, he neglected to tell them that it was unnecessary to go to The Place; and their instructions being to bring the family as well as him, they drove forward to the Craiglands, and were at the door before he was aware of his inadvertency.

Miss Mizy had, on the rupture of her altercation, retired with Mary to dress for dinner: the laird in the morning had put himself in order for the visit, and she was sitting in full blow with him when the carriage arrived. As there was no help for the baronet but to explain how it happened that, notwithstanding the message to the contrary, he had come in Lord Sandyford's coach, he alighted, and was shown into the parlour. Neither Craiglands nor his sister said anything when they saw the carriage stop; but the former concluded in his own mind that Sir Andrew's pretensions had been reinforced by his legacy, and that he had come expressly to make proposals for Mary. Miss Mizy had not

actually arrived at the same conclusion, but she thought it a very prideful incident that, after the message he had received, he should have come, and come too in the ostentation of Lord Sandyford's splendid equipage.

The tenor of these reflections was not calculated to produce any very urbane effect on their countenances; and our hero, on entering the room, was daunted by the solemnity of his reception. Mary at this time was still engaged with her toilet; and as she was not present, he inferred that her absence was to be attributed to the impression of Pierston's death. This idea had the effect of disconcerting him a little; nevertheless, he soon so far mastered the chagrin of the moment as to say, "I beg your pardon, laird, but in truth I was so much overtaken by the news of Mr Pierston's death that I forgot your message, and the servants, not aware of the change in our arrangement for going to Auchinward, brought me here before I was sensible of my inattention."

"It's no surprising that ye should be in a consternation," replied Craiglands,—"wha wouldna? It's no every acquaintance that, without regard to their ain kith and kin, leaves a body sic a power o' siller as I understand ye hae gotten by that thoughtless lad's death."

"Ye have surely your ain luck, Sir Andrew," said Miss Mizy. "I never heard the like o't; but it's a very extraordinary thing—very—that

there wasna the value of a five-pound note for a ring to Miss Peggy Picken, his aunty: no that she stan's in need o't, for she has saved money; but blood is thicker than water."

"I daresay if my poor friend had thought any of his relations stood in a condition to require the bettering of a portion in his gathering, he would hae made provision to that effect," replied Sir Andrew, surprised that they should be already so fully acquainted with so much of the business.

"Wha wouldna be the better o' a share in sic a fortune?" exclaimed the laird. "But, sister, I wish ye would inquire what has become of that daidling bodie, Robin—he's aye ahint the foremost—and see if Mary's ready."

The baronet, who had felt himself excited almost to the heat of indignation, both by the matter and the manner of this short conversation, underwent a transition to a happier state of feeling on hearing that Mary was expected to accompany her father and aunt; and when she soon after appeared with all her charms set off to the best advantage, the whole of his doubts and anxieties with respect to the state of her affections were dissolved; insomuch that when Robin with the carriage at last came to the door, he could not refrain from expressing his regret that he was deprived of the pleasure of her company in Lord Sandyford's coach.

The laird, assisted by him and one of the earl's servants, was raised into the carriage, while Bell

Lampit and the other maids were seen peeping from out the doors of the rooms that opened into the hall. Daft Jamie, who had been all the morning loitering about The Place, stood aloof while the embarkation was going on; but when he saw Lord Sandyford's spruce footman leap up behind the coach after closing the door on Sir Andrew, he stepped forward, and as Robin began to lash his horses, crying, "Jee, brutes!" he took the similar station at the back of the laird's carriage, amidst the laughter of the servants; Bell Lampit coming forward from her concealment, extravagantly clapping her hands.

CHAPTER CI

Ladies without Gentlemen.

LORD SANDYFORD happened to be walking on the lawn in front of the house with Sir Archibald when the coach arrived, and, surprised to find it had brought only our hero, felt something like the sense of a rebuke when he saw him alight with a visible expression of thoughtfulness in his countenance, the effect of his reflections on the occurrences of the morning. For although Sir Andrew was convinced, by the appearance of Mary Cunningham, that he had nothing to apprehend from any attachment to Pierston, there was something in the behaviour of both the laird and Miss Mizy that revolted his feelings, even while it was ludicrous.

The earl went immediately to inquire how it had happened that he came alone, which the baronet briefly explained, by stating that the laird, finding himself well enough to visit, had ordered out his own carriage before the coach arrived. He then mentioned to his lordship the news which he had received of Pierston's death,

warmly eulogising the gratitude by which his friend seemed to have been actuated.

"But," said he, "I can see that his legacy to me will not give satisfaction to his kindred. I have, however, done my duty in it." And he then told the earl what instructions he had sent to Vellum on the subject.

"Why, this is romance," said his lordship; "you should have kept it to make weight against Craiglands' prejudices—at least for some time."

While they were thus conversing, being in the meantime joined by Sir Archibald, the laird's equipage made its appearance, coming laboriously along the principal approach, Robin Taigle lashing with might and main his stubborn cattle, while daft Jamie, aping the consequentiality of a footman, was standing behind the carriage. The appearance of the whole pageantry was irresistibly ridiculous; insomuch that both the earl and Sir Archibald found themselves obliged to retire into the house, leaving our hero, who had more command of his features, to assist the visitors to alight.

The moment that Robin had effected a halt, Jamie jumped down, and with a grand air opened the door, and pulled down the steps.

"What! is that thee, Jamie?" cried the laird. "How hast thou come here?"

"Ah! laird, they'll hae clear e'en and bent brows that'll see sic a flunkey as ye had the day, Craiglands!"

The laird and the ladies had, in the course of their journey, observed that every person they passed on the road stopped and laughed, and they felt strangely awkward, not knowing the cause. But the moment Jamie told the old gentleman the part he had performed, the laird seized his stick, and gave him such a rap on the head that he sent him yelling across the lawn.

"I'll flunkey thee!—to bring sic shame and disgrace on the like o' us," cried the laird. He then accepted the proffered assistance of Sir Andrew's arm, without noticing who it was, and by the help of it, and one of Sir Archibald's footmen, he alighted. The baronet, not aware that he had been only accidentally unnoticed, felt considerably disturbed when the laird, with the intention of being gallant, turned his back on him, and pushing his extended arm aside, thinking it was a servant's, handed the ladies out himself.

"This is a little too much," said he to himself; and he walked away, half resolved at the moment to give up every thought of a connection by which his endurance was likely to be so severely tried. But his anger was never at any time of long duration, and before he had walked twenty paces the fume of the moment had evaporated, and, with a malicious playfulness, he resolved, since the laird was determined to treat him with so little ceremony, that he would retaliate. Accordingly, on going into the drawing-room where the whole party was assembled, after paying his

respects to Lady Margaret, he addressed himself to the countess for a moment, who was sitting on a sofa with Mary Cunningham, and immediately entered into conversation with Lord Sandyford, without further at that time noticing either Craiglands or Miss Mizy.

In taking places at the dinner-table, he hesitated for a moment whether to concede the left hand of Lady Margaret to the laird. But before he had decided, her ladyship with a significant look said, "Sir Andrew, it is your place,"—and he stepped forward as if to take it; but turning round to the old gentleman, who was confounded at finding himself of a lower note than Martha Docken's oye, he said, "Age and antiquity, laird, ye ken, are honours that time can alone bestow. The king may make a belted knight, but he canna an ancient family; so, out of my respect for yours, I'll gie up my place."

The laird, thus uncouthly preferred, sat down in a state of profound perplexity, while Sir Andrew placed himself between the countess and Mary. But nothing surprised the old gentleman so much as the ease and confidence with which the baronet conducted himself, contrasted with the diffidence of his behaviour on the preceding day at the Craiglands.

Miss Mizy had by this time in a great measure recovered from the impression of Miss Peggy Picken's letter, and our hero soon ingratiated himself again into her good graces by some of

those little table civilities which, with ladies of a certain age, indeed of all ages, have the most agreeable influence. So that when she retired after dinner to the drawing-room, she was again the eulogist of his wisdom and singular great good fortune.

"He's really a funny body that Sir Andrew," said Miss Mizy. "I couldna hae thought it possible that he would ever have been able to behave himsel' so like a gentleman as he does."

"Indeed," replied Lady Sandyford, "I assure you he is considered not more a man of merit than of delicacy. His peculiarities serve to give a zest to his humour."

"I am surprised," added Lady Margaret, "that he should have retained his Scottish accent so perfectly."

"It seems to me," rejoined the countess, "much stronger to-day than usual; but, indeed, he appears to have always cherished his national affections upon principle. I should not be surprised were we to discover that some rustic beauty had early interested him. Pray, Miss Cunningham, did you ever hear anything of the kind suggested?" Without, however, waiting for a reply, the countess added, "We have often wondered that he never seemed disposed to form any matrimonial connection in London, and could not account for it but by supposing that his youthful affections had been engaged before he left Scotland."

"I should think, if that had been the case," said Lady Margaret, "he would long since have returned and married; for he is too sensible a man not to be aware that to take a young woman of his own original condition out of her sphere, and to place her in that to which he has himself risen, is not likely to promote their mutual happiness."

"True," said the countess; "but from what I have observed, I should suspect that his attachment must have been towards some very different object. Pray, Miss Cunningham, what families of rank are in this neighbourhood?"

Mary, who was thrilling with she knew not what during this conversation, replied in a manner which betrayed what was passing in her mind, quite as much as the irrelevancy of the answer, "He was always a singular creature."

"Eh, dear!" exclaimed Mizy laughingly, on observing the confusion of her niece, "if Sir Andrew fell in love when he was Wheelie, I wouldna be surprised to hear it was wi' our Mary."

"How can you say so?" cried Mary, reddening extremely, and looking as if afraid to look.

"Have you any reason for that notion, Miss Mizy?" said Lady Margaret seriously; and before the aunt had time to reply, the countess added—

"If the attachment was mutual, I should have some hope of enjoying a Scottish wedding soon. Nay, my dear Miss Cunningham," said her lady-

ship, addressing Mary, who was sitting beside her, while she at the same time took her by the hand, "Sir Andrew is an excellent creature; and supposing for a moment that there were any foundation for what we have been saying, how would you like to be called Lady Wylie?"

"Oh, she'll ne'er be that wi' Sir Andrew!" cried Miss Mizy triumphantly; "for she ne'er could endure to hear a good word said o' him."

"I should think," replied Mary, with some degree of firmness, "that I did him injustice if I had not fully acknowledged his merits, though I did not acquiesce in all that my aunt chose to say. But it could never enter my head to imagine that he would address me as a lover."

"How could you? He has been so long absent, you can have seen but little of each other," said the countess.

"True; and perhaps from that cause I am less sensible of his merits than those who have seen more of him," replied Mary.

"It's our Mary's fortune to refuse good offers," interposed Miss Mizy.

"Good offers!" said Mary indignantly. "Yes, the offers that you and my father call good, but which no woman of any delicacy would have listened to for a moment."

"I perceive that we are carrying this subject too far," said the countess.

"Not at all," replied Mary with dignity; "why should I hesitate to say to your ladyship

that I have seen few men of whom I know so little that I respect more than the little baronet?" And she added laughingly, "I never could think of him but as the droll creature, Wheelie."

"Whom you assisted to learn fifty psalms behind a tombstone," replied the countess archly.

Mary was startled at the observation, and the look with which it was accompanied.

"I fear," said Lady Margaret jocularly, "that this is idle talk; for, from Craiglands' known and obvious prejudices, any offer from Sir Andrew would not be very acceptable."

"Acceptable here or acceptable there," was Miss Mizy's reply, "ye ken, Leddy Margaret, that the laird is a man that can abide no sort of trouble; and though it was the king himsel' that offered, he wouldna tak' the pains to inquire about the fitness o' the match, but just be as dure as a door-nail, whichever way the thing gaed with his humour at the time."

"But your influence in any case," rejoined the countess, "might have the most beneficial effects."

"If any proper man were to make an offer, and Mary willing, the wedding would just hae to go on without consent, for the laird would come in til't or a' was done," said Miss Mizy.

"Then there would be no objection on your part, even to Sir Andrew?" said Lady Sandyford.

"As for me," replied Miss Mizy, "Sir Andrew has so kithed[1] into the great man I always thought he would be, that I freely own the offer, an it were made, would to me be a great satisfaction."

"Well, I must say," exclaimed Mary, laughing, "this is one way of making a match."

[1] *Kithed*, &c. Become manifestly the great man.

CHAPTER CII

The Compact.

WHILE the ladies, free from the restraint which the presence of the other sex ever imposes on the conversation of all womankind, were furthering the decrees of fate in the drawing-room, the gentlemen at their wine were no less ingeniously working out the same desired effects. Sir Archibald was a hospitable landlord, according to the Scottish acceptation of the term; and as the laird had a hereditary respect for what he called the sociable bottle, his spirits began to mount, and he joked with our hero on his great good-luck, inquiring what for he hadna brought an English lady with him.

"They say, Sir Andrew, ye hae gotten a gude bargain o' the Wylie estate, and ye should mak' some bonny lassie the better o't."

"I think so too," observed Sir Archibald, "and I'm sure he could not do better than make up to your daughter, Craiglands;" and before the laird had time to reply, he added, addressing himself to the earl, "I wish, my lord, we could persuade

our friend to look that way. It is true, his rank is equal to my own, and that Lady Margaret is the sister of a duke; but the Craiglands family is highly respectable. I beg your pardon, Sir Andrew, I have perhaps taken too great a liberty in this jocular proposal."

"Oh," said Lord Sandyford, "if you knew Sir Andrew as well as I do, you would not lay so much stress on the disparity of rank; no man can set less, nor at the same time a more just, value upon it. Pray, Mr Cunningham, was your father in Parliament?"

Craiglands' spirits, which had previously been rising, had undergone a strange depression by these observations; and the accent and look with which he answered "No" to the earl's question almost upset the gravity of the whole conspirators.

"Perhaps, however," resumed the earl, "your grandfather was?"

The laird was still more mortified when obliged to repeat the negative.

"That's very extraordinary," said his lordship, as if drawing himself up into his nobility.

The laird found himself sinking, as it were, into the swinish multitude, especially when Sir Archibald added, "I do not recollect, Craiglands, at this moment, if any of your ancestors were baronets."

"Never mind, laird, whether they were or no," cried Sir Andrew, who perceived that the

joke had been carried quite far enough; "I'll no object to Miss Mary on that account. But I doubt were you and me 'gree't[1] about the job, Miss Mizy wouldna be willing to grant her consent."

"And wha the deevil gied her ony consent in the matter?" exclaimed the old gentleman, glad to find himself not utterly insignificant.

Lord Sandyford by this little sally discovered the laird's jealousy of his sister's authority, and said, "It is certainly natural enough that an old maiden aunt should be averse to see her niece promoted to a higher rank than her own; but surely the baronet is not in earnest when he supposes that Mr Cunningham is subject to any control from his sister with respect to the disposal of his daughter. The thing is not for a moment to be imagined."

"No, I'll be d——d if it is!" cried the laird, bravely striking the table to augment the emphasis of his asseveration. "Mary Cunningham is my dochter, and the Craiglands my estate."

"I thought," interrupted Sir Archibald, "that the Craiglands was entailed?"

"And so it is," replied the laird; "but it's on heirs-general, and in the course of nature it will be Mary's."

"Oh," exclaimed the earl, "in that case your sister herself might succeed?"

"What o' that?" cried the laird quickly.

[1] *'Gree't.* Agreed.

"Nothing—oh, nothing!" replied his lordship carelessly; "but the chance of succeeding, though remote, may induce the old lady to place obstacles in the way of Miss Cunningham ever being married at all;" and his lordship added, with a very sentimental accent, "Human life is full of uncertainty, and the young as well as the old are the daily victims of death. Though the thought is painful, yet more extraordinary events have occurred than that of Miss Cunningham dying even before her father. Were her aunt to succeed to the family estate, the old lady might be induced, by some needy young fellow, to overlook her own advanced age. I would not affirm that she contemplates any such contingency; but in the casualties and follies of the world, there is a reasonable ground for supposing, not to say suspecting, that she may be actuated by considerations of that kind."

The laird looked alternately at each of the gentlemen present, while Sir Archibald, with a countenance expressive of the most alarming sagacity, said, "That accounts for it—that accounts for it! No one ever before could give a satisfactory reason why a gentleman, like my friend Craiglands here, should have kept his only daughter and heiress so long in such a state of seclusion; but none of us was aware that Miss Mizy might have interested motives for preventing the young lady from forming a suitable matrimonial connection."

"De'il tak me!" exclaimed the laird, "but I'm thinking ye hae made a true guess, for I ne'er could get to the bottom o' my sister's objections to this young man and to that. When was there a more proper match than Tam Delap o' Southenan, that's heir to the whole tot o' his uncle's land and gatherings? And she gart the poor simple lassie trow he was little better than silly. Lordsake, Sir Andrew, I wish ye would but speer Mary's price?"

"With all my heart," cried our hero.

"Then gie's your hand, and a bargain be't, gin ye find her willing," cried the laird; and with that, stretching out his hand, he shook our hero's heartily. Upon which Sir Archibald insisted that a fresh bottle should be opened, to drink success to a courtship so sanctioned; but as it was not the policy of the allied powers to allow the laird time to revoke his pledge, the earl soon after proposed that they should join the ladies.

The laird, elevated by the wine, and the valorous sense of the independence he had shown, entered the drawing-room with a triumphant countenance, but somewhat unsteady in his steps, and with his hands stretched out as if he was groping his way. Miss Cunningham, on observing his condition, immediately rose and led him to a chair.

"That's a dawty!" was the delighted old gentleman's exclamation. "It's a' settled—it's a' settled!"

"What's settled?" cried Miss Mizy.

"Settle thysel', Mizy, and dinna scaud[1] thy lips in other folks' kail," retorted the laird; and he added exultingly, "Leddies, do ye ken that me and Sir Andrew hae made a paction, in presence of my lord and Sir Archibald, whereby it is covenanted between us that he's to mak' my dochter, Mary Cunningham, Leddy Wylie? Gang up to her, Sir Andrew—gang up, ye blate[2] wee deevil, and gie her a smack on the tae cheek, and syne on the tother: that's the way to woo."

The ladies exchanged looks with one another; and Miss Cunningham, foreseeing some impending embarrassment, rose and proposed to her aunt, as the evening was far spent, that they should return home. The carriages were accordingly ordered, and, in the course of a few minutes, it was announced that they were at the door.

[1] *Scaud.* Scald. [2] *Blate.* Shy and awkward.

CHAPTER CIII

An Accident.

WHILE the laird in the dining-room was becoming generous with Auchinward's claret, Robin Taigle in the servants'-hall grew so mellow with the ale that, when the carriage was called, every object danced before his bewildered sight, and the sure and steadfast earth felt to him as if it were reeling beneath his steps; insomuch that even daft Jamie said to him, "Robin, we hae a lang road before us; but I'm feart ye'll be mair fashed wi' the breadth than the length o't."

However, by the help of Sir Archibald's servants, Robin was placed in his saddle. Nevertheless, when the family came to embark, his condition was so apparent that Sir Andrew, for whom Lord Sandyford's carriage was again in attendance, insisted that they should accept of it. The ladies would gladly have availed themselves of the offer—Miss Mizy declaring that "it was a black burning shame to be seen driven by sic a drunken betheral." But the laird was inexorable.

"We hae our own carriage," said he; "and

what for shouldna we tak' the use o't? As for that do-na-gude Robin, I'll let you see what I'll do wi' him when I get him hame. There shall be a revolution in the house ere lang, tak' my word for't; so, sister, kipple[1] up your coats and step in; and, Mary, gie me a grip o' your shouther."

Our hero, however, and the servants, saved her from the pressure of his weight, and after some effort, with their more vigorous shoves and pushes, he was raised into his seat. An inarticulate growl, intended for the customary "Jee, brutes!" from Robin, then admonished the horses that they were free to proceed.

Sir Andrew, apprehensive, from the state of the charioteer, that some accident might ensue, directed Lord Sandyford's servants to keep close behind with him, in order to be in readiness to assist. Nor was this precaution unnecessary; for, as dart Jamie predicted, the breadth of the road so troubled Robin, that the carriage went forward, tacking from side to side like a vessel beating against the wind, at every change of the zigzag driving to the very edge of jeopardy. More than once, to use another nautical phrase, it missed stays; and, but for the sagacity of "the brutes" in backing, in spite of Robin's whip, the whole concern would assuredly have been cast away in the ditch. However, under that special providence which the proverb says guards all

[1] *Kipple.* Fasten.

persons in the situation of this worthy coachman, the family were enabled to pass the Girdle in safety; but opposite the south gate of Eglinton, Robin seemed to hesitate, as if at a loss whether to take the Stanecastle road, or to proceed straight forward: a circumstance which surprised his master, who said justly that, had he been in his sober senses, he ought to have known the road better, and ordered him to go on to Irvine. But against this, Miss Mizy judiciously protested, affirming, in the most reasonable manner, that it would be a disgrace to them for ever to pass through the town with such a pirlet[1] of a driver. Accordingly, at her suggestion, Robin was commanded by the laird, with many vituperative epithets—such as, "I'll learn you to fill yoursel fu'," and so forth—to take the wynd which leads from the Bullet-road to the Dinton-knowe; by which the family were spared from the gibes and jeers of the observant inhabitants of the ancient royal burgh.

Still all went well, and the evening was beautiful. As they drove down the Kilwinning road, the gentle features of the scenery on the right were rendered still more pleasing by the softening medium of a slight aërial haze; and the swelling hills in front, beyond the woods of Eglinton, as they rose in the sober livery of the twilight, seemed to assume an abrupt and mountainous character; while dark masses of cloud,

[1] *Pirlet.* Puny body.

intermingled with hoary mists, like the steaming vapours of a volcano, covered the summits of Goatfell, and gave it the appearance of Mount Etna, which it so much resembles in form and outline. But our travellers were not long permitted to contemplate the calm still beauties of the summer evening. Just as Robin crossed the Redburn bridge, by some unlucky and unguarded pull of the reins one of the horses gave a sudden plunge, and the carriage was overturned in the hedge.

The ladies were speedily extricated, but the poor laird was lifted out insensible. He, however, soon recovered, and at first it did not appear he had received any material injury. But, on being conveyed home with the ladies and the baronet in Lord Sandyford's coach, on alighting he complained of something no right with his inward parts; adding, however, that it was a merciful thing his head was so strong as to withstand the dunt[1] that stunned him in the couping.[2]

Sir Andrew advised the ladies to send for a doctor; but this the old gentleman would not permit, for, among his other prejudices and affections, he nourished a dislike to the faculty, declaring that "since doctors had learned to keep counts like shopkeepers, when they get a man ill they hae as natural an interest to keep him ill as the wabsters and souters in the health

[1] *Dunt.* Stroke. [2] *Couping.* Capsizing.

and well-doing o' their customers." The better to colour his repugnance to send for Doctor Atomy, the medical friend of the family, he affected to make light of his hurt by exerting a degree of energy and activity preternatural to his character. In the course of the night, however, he felt himself so seriously pained that he was obliged to raise the house.

In the meantime our hero, who had retired to his grandmother's, reflected with some degree of anxiety on the events of the day. He saw, in the caprice and prejudices of the laird, many ingredients calculated to embitter a connection with his family; nor was he altogether satisfied with the cold and studied reserve with which Mary had treated him after dinner in the drawing-room. His experience of the world had not instructed him in the devices of the female heart, and he was not aware that the very same demeanour which checked and repressed his ardour, and made him doubt whether he ought even to disclose to her his long attachment, would, to a man more accustomed to the innocent wiles of womankind, have been regarded as the most encouraging symptom. In a word, he began to suspect that he had been betrayed by the influence of early recollections into a fond folly, and to think that perhaps the wisest step he could take would be to abandon his intention at once.

Why he should have given way to such reflec-

tions as these, especially as the obstacles hitherto opposed to his desires had been so greatly lessened in the course of the day, must, we imagine, be ascribed to the circumstances and vacillations of the lover's lunacy. Certain it is that he fell asleep after almost working himself into a persuasion that he ought not to think of irremediably uniting himself with a stock so knotted and gnarled with obsolete prejudices as that of Craiglands; and that he awoke in the morning with the most delightful anticipations, as if, during sleep, his mind had unconsciously reasoned itself back again into a more congenial way of thinking. He was perfectly persuaded that the laird, with all his faults and foibles, was in the main a man possessed of many of the homely virtues that befit the character of a resident landlord.

Immediately after breakfast, accordingly, he walked to The Place for the purpose of explaining to Mary the motives of his visit to Scotland; but on entering the parlour he found only Miss Mizy. "I fear," said she, "that my brother has gotten an inward injury, and we're a' sae concerned at the ill night he has passed that we hae sent for Doctor Atomy to come immediately to see him." The baronet expressed his sorrow, and (as the lady told us herself) sympathised in a feeling manner that showed both his great judgment and sensibility.

Mary, in the meantime, was attending her

father, and perhaps, under the circumstances, her lover might that morning have left the house without seeing her, but for Bell Lampit, who now foresaw, by so many signs of intercourse and growing cordiality, that a wedding would ensue, and could not resist her desire to inform Miss Cunningham that the baronet was in the house.

"What's your will, Miss Mary?" said Bell, looking in at the door of the laird's room, as if she had been really summoned.

"I did not ring: it must have been my aunt," was the reply.

"Na, na, Miss Mary, she has other fish to fry!" exclaimed Bell in an audible whisper, stepping forward into the room with long tiptoe-strides, using her arms and hands as if they had been wings to lighten her footfalls—"She's wi' Sir Andrew!"

"What's that tinkler tawpy doing here?"

"Eh! megsty, maister! I thought ye were soun' sleeping; hoo're ye the day, after the dreadful coup? Robin has gotten an awful cloor[1] on the broo; we think his harnpan's surely dunklet."

"An I were at thee, I would 'hoo're' thee: out o' my presence this moment! De'il an the like of that hizzy was e'er in ony creditable family!" exclaimed the laird.

[1] *Cloor . . . dunklet.* Stroke on the forehead . . . his skull's cracked.

"O maister!" retorted the learned Bell, "ye should thole[1] better; a man struggling with calamity is a sight worthy of the gods!"

Mary was obliged to laugh at this mal-appropriation of one of Seneca's conceits, while, at the same time, she ordered Bell to leave the room.

"Ye see, Mary, my dear," said the old gentleman, "what it is to exceed the bounds of edication, for it's no to be doubted that too much learning has made yon lassie mad, as well as the Apostle Paul. The heads of the commonality are, in my opinion, not of a capacity to take in muckle mair than the plain truths o' Scripture and the Mother's Carritches. The Question-book's ouer kittle[2] for the best o' them; I mysel' never got farther than 'No mere man.'"

The laird was proceeding in this way to give his opinion on the popular subject of general education, his fever disposing him to become talkative, when Miss Mizy entered.

"Mary," said the old lady significantly, "ye'll gang doun the stair and entertain Sir Andrew, and I'll bide wi' your father till the doctor comes."

"Doctor!" vociferated the laird. "Wha the deevil has sent for the doctor to me? They had a stock o' impudence. A doctor to a bit birz

[1] *Thole.* Endure.

[2] *Mother's Carritches. The Question-book's ouer kittle.* Mother's Catechism. The Shorter Catechism's too difficult.

that I'll soon no be a prin the waur o'.[1] I hae nae broo[2] o' doctors; for though they may learn at the college to haggle aff a sair leg or to howk out a rotten tooth,[3] they ken as little about complaints in the stomach as a loch-leech, and no sae muckle; for the leech, poor thing, has a natural knowledge o' what it's about, and seeks nae fee but a pickle saut on its neb and a drap caller water in a bottle. Nane o' the droguery nor the roguery o' doctors for me."

"Brother, ye're maunnerin," said Miss Mizy, Mary having in the meantime left the room. "I wish ye would be still and compose yoursel, and no fash your head with sic clishmaclavers."

"Whar's Mary?" cried the laird; "I would rather hae her here than thee. For she's o' a mild and a meek nature, the which is a blessed inheritance, as Mr Symington said on Sunday, and worthy of all acceptation; whereas there be those of a worldly grain and substance, coarse to heckle, and ill to card,[4] and needing mony a rug and rive, by the powerfu' hand of chastisement, before their souls are wrought into garments o' praise."

"Brother," said Miss Mizy kindly, struck by the growing incoherency of the old gentleman, "I dout ye're waur than ye let wit."

[1] *Birz . . . prin the waur o'.* Bruise . . . pin the worse of.
[2] *Broo.* Favourable opinion.
[3] *Haggle aff . . . howk out.* Cut off clumsily . . . dig out
[4] *Heckle . . . card.* Dress, as flax.

"I'm unco dry," was the answer. "It's a wonder o' nature that the mair a body drinks he aye grows the drier; but Sir Archibald's claret was of a fine quality, and really yon Sir Andrew's a comical creature—I trow I gart the perjink[1] English yerl laugh when I said that Sir Andrew would never be able to kiss our Mary, unless he could speel[2] up and get his taes in her pouches. It's my fear that their bairns will be sic wee moudiwarts o' things that when they begin to tottle about the house we'll hae to tie bells to their backs to hear whar they gang, for I'm thinking they'll be running in aneath the beds. 'Odsake, but I would be blithe to see the wee totties spinning about the floor like peeries."[3]

"I beg," said his sister, with an accent of anxiety and grief, "that you will try to keep yoursel quiet. It's no right to indulge sic vagaries."

"Arena they my ain grandchilder?" exclaimed the laird. "Would ye hae me as void o' naturality for them as you that's but their aunty?—and no even that, for ye're a remove farther off, Mizy. I'll send to Glasgow for a hobbyhorse to Willy, 'cause he's ca'd baith for me and my ain poor Willy that dee't of his wounds. Many a sore hour o' suffering he had; but he was a brave lad wi' a leal heart. His wound wasna on

[1] *Perjink.* Proper, precise.
[2] *Speel.* Climb. [3] *Peeries.* Tops.

the back; but won in the front o' the battle, and worn on his breast like a star o' honour."

The poor old man's paternal feelings overcame him, and he lay weeping with a childish fondness and simplicity, till Miss Mizy, unable any longer to control her apprehensions at the rapid progress of the delirium, hastily ran downstairs to communicate her alarm.

CHAPTER CIV

The Death and Burial.

WHEN Miss Mizy entered the parlour, she disturbed her niece and the baronet in the middle of a very interesting conversation. He had not actually fallen on his knees before the adored object of his romantic fondness, as the novelists of the feminine gender would describe a heroine similarly situated. But, after adverting to the occurrences of the preceding day, he was advancing as rapidly towards a disclosure of the wish nearest his heart as could reasonably be expected from a man of his temperance in all things, and Miss Cunningham was listening as if she enjoyed the fulfilment of an ancient prediction, calm and smiling, but with a slow and profound emotion, that affected the very bottom of her heart—a smooth, rolling swell and undulation of the spirit, which a little more vehemence in her lover might have thrown into all those tempestuous commotions which formerly belonged to the lady's part of the performance in a declaration of love. She had long—for we may now speak freely of her sentiments — contemplated,

with a strange feeling of wonder blended with pleasure, the arrangement that fate appeared to be making for the era which had now arrived. Every new instance of our hero's advancement, as it came to her knowledge, contained, as it were, an admonition of their predestinated union; and this presentiment was never affected by any of those saddening influences which the mystic sense and auguries of fatalism commonly excite. The image of Wylie was associated in her imagination with the bright and joyous days of childhood; and his small and ungainly figure was in her imagination so wreathed (if the expression may be allowed) with the garlands of happy recollections that it was endeared to the eyes of habitual affection with something more interesting than the advantages of personal appearance.

"Mary," said her aunt, bursting hastily into the room, "it's my opinion your father's gaun by himsel'."

Miss Cunningham, alarmed at the news, started from her seat and hurried upstairs. At the same moment Dr Atomy arrived, and daft Jamie, who was lounging about the house, on seeing the doctor alight, ran forward to hold his horse.

"Jamie," said the doctor, "is that you?"

"'Deed is't," replied Jamie, taking the bridle; "it's my ain mother's son."

"And who is your mother, Jamie?" rejoined the doctor.

"She's vera weel, I thank you, sir," was the

answer; which so discomposed the gravity of the doctor that he came into the parlour with a gayer countenance than suited the occasion, insomuch that Miss Mizy put on a visage proportionally more solemn.

"My brother's vera ill, doctor," said she, "and Sir Andrew Wylie—this is Sir Andrew—is just waiting to hear what ye think o' him."

"Is this the great Sir Andrew Wylie?" exclaimed the doctor, looking towards our hero, and bending forward with an expression of amazement in his face, which gradually assumed the cast of veneration; and, before the baronet had time to make any reply, he went up to him and said—

"What is your opinion, Sir Andrew, of the late fall in the funds?"

"Doctor," interposed Miss Mizy, "ye maunna enter on your bad times just noo. Gang first and see my brother; and then ye can come and converse wi' Sir Andrew about the breaking o' the Government."

The baronet, perceiving the solicitude of the old lady, in the hopes that by a precise answer the doctor would the sooner go to the patient, replied that he considered the recent fall a temporary fluctuation.

"I am most happy to hear you think so!" exclaimed the doctor, and was proceeding to enlarge on the subject, when Miss Mizy again interrupted him.

"My brother," said she, "has met wi' a severe birz and contusion, and he's in a raving fever."

"The fall has been considerable," rejoined the doctor, thinking of the funds.

"'Deed it was a mercy we werena a' killed outright," replied Miss Mizy; "for the chaise made a clean whammle,[1] and the laird was lowermost."

The doctor, still intent on his own topic, said to Sir Andrew, "I trust, however, that the effects will not be permanent. It is melancholy to think how uncertain everything is."

"Ye ne'er, doctor, made a wiser observe," said Miss Mizy, morally; "for, after spending a most pleasant day at Auchinward, wha could hae thought we would hae to dree so soon sic a penance for our pleasure?"

Dr Atomy looked round with a compassionate smile at Miss Mizy, and then began to speak on the common popular topics of the day to the baronet, who, not altogether pleased with his pertinacity, reminded him of the object of his visit. The doctor (keep him free from "bad times") was an amiable and humane character, and this admonition was effectual. He immediately followed Miss Mizy to her brother's apartment.

To the first question which he put to the laird, the reply was characteristic.

"I'm vera weel, doctor," said the patient: "ne'er was better; but there's a something I

1 *Whammle.* Overturn.

dinna understand wi' me, for a' that. I'm fashed wi' strange folk: crowds o' them come and sit behind the curtains of my bed-head, and the de'il a ane of them will speak out, and tell me their cracks; but they continue whispering and whispering, and hugger-muggering,[1] as if they were smuggling something awa'."

Both his sister and daughter, who were standing beside the doctor, were much affected by this speech, and could not refrain from tears; for it was too evident, from the doctor's manner, that there was then indeed something about to be removed. The whisperings of which the dying man complained were the voices of those who had been sent to bear him from this mortal world.

The doctor having as delicately as he could expressed his fears for the consequences of the injury which the old gentleman had suffered, and having prescribed some simple medicine—rather to uphold the character of the profession than with any hope of doing the patient good—soon after retired, and Bell Lampit was almost immediately despatched to the manse to request the attendance of Mr Symington.

Bell, who never tarried on her errands between one person and another, met the minister walking leisurely by himself on the shady side of the high-road.

"Ye maun come up to The Place directly, sir,"

[1] *Hugger-muggering.* Acting in a clandestine way.

was her salutation; "for we're a' feared that the laird's vital spark's gaun out. Miss Mary sent me wi' her compliments to bid you come."

"I'm very sorry to hear this. I understood his hurt was of no consequence," replied the clergyman.

"'Deed, sir," said Bell, "his life is just like the dying lamp's unsteady flame. 'To be or not to be,' is the state of his precious soul; so I hope ye'll no delay, for it will be a sad and a sore thing if the laird's alloo't to jump the shoal o' time like the beasts that perish." And holding a jargon dialect of this sort, Bell returned home with the minister; but before reaching the house the inflammation of the brain had so rapidly advanced that the patient was in no condition to receive the spiritual physician.

In the course of the afternoon the violence of the symptoms abated, and for several days the laird languished under the evident decay of all his faculties. He was not, apparently, very ill; but his strength was entirely prostrated, and he lingered within the imbecility of second childhood, in its most helpless state, smitten with a patient silliness that could not be seen without sorrow. He had lost the sense of present objects, and fondled over the recollections of former years. Sometimes he thought of his lady, and would talk to her of their household concerns: occasionally chiding her for being low-spirited, and reminding her of the great honour and advantages of fortune

which she had acquired by their marriage. But the playfulness of his children in their childhood chiefly engaged his fancy; and he would chuckle with the greatest glee at their little pranks. In the midst of his mirth, however, some gleam of reminiscence would shoot across his mind; and, suddenly recollecting that his darling Willy was long dead, he would break out into fresh and loud lamentations, like the grief of an innocent child that bewails the loss of a favourite bird. In this condition he continued seven days. In the afternoon of the eighth, prostrate nature seemed to rally her forces; but death was more powerful, and she sank in the contest.

Though Craiglands possessed few of those qualities which attract general popularity or personal esteem, he was yet so blameless in his life and so easy as a landlord that he enjoyed among his tenants and village neighbours something kindlier and stronger than either popularity or esteem. The homeliness of his manners came in aid of their national reverence for the honours of birth and rank, and made them yield a homage of feeling and respect when they heard of his death as profound as that which is paid to the memory of far greater beneficence, talent, and worth. He was, besides, the last of an ancient line—a circumstance in itself calculated to awaken interesting associations; for although his sister and daughter survived, the country folks around considered the family extinguished

by the death of the last male heir. The day of his funeral was, in consequence, one of great solemnity in Stoneyholm, and all the neighbouring hamlets. Not only the gentry, but the tenants, attended, and many of the inhabitants of the village: a vast concourse of old and young assembled at The Place; and the retinue that followed the hearse was in perfect accordance with the pageantry which the people thought due to the obsequies of the last laird.

Among several old persons in the village who had spent their lives in the service of the Craiglands was Thomas Daisy, a very aged man, of such a venerable appearance that it was a common saying that nobody could tell when he was young. He had been upwards of seventy years nominally the gardener; but for some time prior to this period he had been pensioned with a widow in Stoneyholm. Feeble with extreme age and infirmity, he had not strength to join the other mourners at The Place, but he waited for the procession at the door of the cottage where he resided, and as it passed he came forward leaning on his staff. Holding his hat in his hand, and, with slow and tottering steps, he followed at some little distance. His venerable appearance, his long flowing grey hairs, and the silent sorrow with which he moved along by himself, attracted the attention of the children of Mr. Tannyhill's school, and they gradually detached themselves from the spectators, and forming a circle round

him as he falteringly walked forward, insensibly fell into the order of a little procession, of which he was the leader.

When the hearse reached the gate of the churchyard, the carriages of the gentry drew aside, and the coffin was taken out and placed on the spakes.[1] This occupied a little time, during which old Thomas, attended by the children, came up, and passed on towards the family burying-place. It was an ancient, massy, walled enclosure, ornamented with sculptured skulls and urns. A tablet, on which the arms of the Craiglands Cunninghams had been emblazoned in the rude carving of the sixteenth century, occupied a niche over the entrance. This trophy of the olden time had long been respected by the villagers; but during the incumbency of Doctor Dozadeal, the churchyard gate happened to be allowed to fall from its hinges, by which the school-boys in their play-hours having free access, it had suffered among other of their dilapidations. Certainly, however, from no malice against the family; on the contrary, solely, if we rightly recollect our own juvenile sentiments on the occasion (being concerned in the devastation), from a most conscientious abhorrence of the idolatrous beasts of Papistry and Prelacy, some traditionary opinion having arisen in the school that the said arms, with the supporters, had been

[1] *The spakes.* The wooden bars on which the body was carried to the grave.

idols of old, belonging to that once Babylonish sanctuary, the Abbey of Kilwinning. Nor was the notion entirely without a shadow of historical fact; for the founder of the Craiglands Cunninghams was a cadet of the Glencairn family; and when the pious Earl of that name herried[1] the religious houses of Ayrshire during the Reformation, Sir Firebrand Cunningham of Burnthebyke came in for a share of the plunder, and so laid the subsequent grandeur of his descendants in the portion which he received of the domains of that rich abbacy. The laird, at the time when the arms were defaced, had been officiously (as we well recollect it was deemed) told of the exploit, and had vowed a terrible vengeance, and also to restore the sculpture—neither of which, however, he performed; so that it was observed as an ominous and remarkable thing that the escutcheon of the family was entirely obliterated.

When the coffin was borne to the entrance of the sepulchre, the spakes were drawn out, and the undertaker's men having carried it within the enclosure, it was placed on two planks over the grave, till a few particular friends who followed it had received the cords attached to the handles. At this moment old Thomas, with his head still bare, came forward opposite to the entrance, and as the planks were removed, and the remains of his old master were lowered into the earth, he was unable to control his emotion. When the

1 *Herried.* Robbed.

spectators in silence uncovered, as the coffin reached its last rest—a homage to the dispensations of Heaven more affecting than any other funeral service—he sunk down on his knees, and continued in that posture till the grave was filled, the earth trodden in, and the turf laid for ever.[1]

[1] See Note A.—Burials, *Annals of the Parish;* and *The Entail*, Chapter IX.

CHAPTER CV

The Conclusion.

IT is, in our opinion, a more awful thing to be born than to die; but without descanting upon the question, it cannot be doubted that it is easier to write the first than the last chapter of a book. Every one of our readers must have seen that the laird's death, though it no doubt delayed, yet was not an event calculated to subtract anything from, the happiness of our hero. Indeed, within as short a period as decency would permit, and shorter too than the prudent Miss Mizy thought decent, Mary and the baronet were united. It would have afforded us the greatest pleasure to describe the notable tasks and cares which Miss Mizy took upon herself at the wedding: how she received a roving commission from her niece, the heiress and bride, to go into Glasgow, and, in conjunction with Miss Peggy Picken, there to make the most judicious purchases for the bridal paraphernalia; in what manner, for two whole days, the judicious maiden gentlewomen went from shop to shop, inspecting and pricing

the articles, until they had ascertained where the best could be got cheapest; how Miss Peggy caught a severe cold in the reconnoitre, and was obliged to wear a piece of red flannel round her throat (a most sovereign remedy) when they sallied forth to make the actual purchases; in what manner they were received on that occasion, in consequence of having taxed the politeness and civility of the shopkeepers to the utmost stretch of human patience in the preliminary visits. But all these things would demand a circumstantiality of narration totally incompatible with the rapid summation of a concluding chapter. Let it suffice, then, to say that Sir Andrew and Mary, after being three several Sundays proclaimed in church,[1] were united by Mr Symington at The Place in the holy bands of matrimony, in presence only of the venerable grandmother, Mr Tannyhill, and the servants, Miss Mizy acting as bridemaid. On this occasion Bell Lampit, seeing old Martha affected to tears, thought proper at the conclusion of the blessing to tune her pipes, and send forth a most vociferous sobbing and wail; which, however, instead of awakening any sympathy, set all present a-laughing.

Lord and Lady Sandyford had, immediately after the laird's death, returned to Chastington Hall, where, as soon as an easy journey permitted, they were visited by the happy pair.

[1] See Note A.—Marriages, *Annals of the Parish.*

During that visit, much to the surprise of the Marquis of Avonside, Sir Andrew accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and ended his parliamentary career—an event which the marquis attributed to the exercise of some sinister influence on the part of the Earl of Sandyford, whom his lordship considered as envious of the address by which he had secured the great talents of the baronet to the ministerial side. Sir Andrew also, at the same time, closed his lucrative connection with Mr Vellum, declaring that he was satisfied with the fortune he had acquired. The earl and countess again urged him to become their neighbour, and Castle Rooksborough, which his lordship had in the meantime purchased, was formally offered as a temptation; but firm in his intention to promote the welfare of his native country, he resisted alike the solicitations of interest and friendship, and returned to Scotland, where he has since continued to reside permanently; making, however, occasional visits with his lady to his old southern friends,—in the last of which he heard that Ferrers, who occasioned so much unhappiness to the countess, had been killed in the Peninsula, and that the rector, who was also dead, had amply provided for the orphan Monimia.

The only part of our hero's conduct which has excited any speculation (and we mention it without comment), since it may be deemed equivocal, is the manner in which he has acted towards his grandmother. Many of the

villagers at Stoneyholm thought that, when he rebuilt the mansion-house of Wylie, he ought to have removed Martha to it: indeed, Lady Wylie herself was very urgent with the old woman to live with them; but the baronet said nothing, while Martha declared that they would both better show their regard by allowing her to spend the evening of her days in her own way, peaceably in the service of Him who had vouchsafed, of His own free grace, to shed such unmerited abundance on her declining years.

By an arrangement conducted through the medium of Sir Archibald Maybole, Mr Symington got a call to the parish of Auchinward; and Mr Tannyhill, to the surprise and delight of the people, who had long venerated his amiable and gentle disposition, was promoted from the school to the church, where he still exercises with undiminished mildness the pastoral duties of the cure.[1] On a late occasion, when in the neighbourhood, we went to his "Examine," chiefly drawn thither by mere curiosity, many years having passed away since we were present at anything of the kind. We found him seated in the venerable carved walnut elbow-chair, amidst the elders in the session-house, listening with patient affection to the replies of the youth of both sexes assembled; and it seemed to our observant eyes that he often sighed to remark

[1] See Note A.—*Education* and the *Communion Services. Annals of the Parish.*

how much they were inferior in religious knowledge to their orthodox parents. Among others present was a lad, Robin Kennedy, clothed in the sprucest cut of Clipping Jock, who, under the style and title of Mr Shaper, had, after three months' insight with Messrs Buts and Lining, clothiers on the South Bridge of Edinburgh, supplanted his old master, Thomas Steek, in the business of the young farmers of the parish. Robin Kennedy was dressed in his Sunday suit; but happening unfortunately to be seated on a bench where a nail protruded, in standing up to answer the question, "What does every sin deserve?" he tore his breeches, and exclaimed, looking back at the nail, and feeling the wounded corduroy, "God's curse!"

"Very well, Robin," said Mr Tannyhill; "but soberly and coolly."

For some reason or another, not explained in any satisfactory manner to the public, Miss Mizy is permitted to enjoy The Place by herself, where she is sometimes visited by the baronet and Lady Wylie, with their children. But on those occasions the drawing-room is always carefully locked; for the children, as she has herself assured us, are such tempests, particularly the boys, that they have no mercy on the furniture. One of them, before the precaution of locking the door, actually picked off the putty which, as we have described, concealed the face of the blooming May in the emblematic picture of that month. And here we

should not omit to inform our readers that when we last called at The Place, Miss Mizy told us that in sorting some old papers she had made a great literary discovery: namely, a volume written by her brother, in his own handwriting, containing, as she assured us, "a most full account of all manner of particularities anent the decay of the ancient families of the West Country"—a work that we have some reason to hope Sir Andrew may induce her to transmit to us, in order that we may arrange it for publication; for though, as she observed, "the laird wasna a man of book lair, he had yet a nerve at observation, and a faculty to note whatsoever came to pass, in a manner just extraordinar, as any rational person, no over-critical about points and phrases, may very clearly discern." Should the baronet succeed in procuring the manuscript, we shall lose no time in sending it to press for the entertainment and edification of the public. Meanwhile, having brought his own biography to a close, we leave him, as all heroes ought to be left, in the full enjoyment of the manifold gifts and felicities which prudence and good fortune united can procure.

NOTES

NOTES

Note A.—CAPTION AND HORNING.

Horning and *caption* were forms of diligence. *Letters of horning,* which ran in the name of the sovereign, directed the messengers-at-arms to charge the person against whom the letters were directed to pay or to perform in terms of the will of the letters. *Letters of caption,* which also ran in the name of the sovereign and were authenticated by his signet, ordered the judges and officers of the law to incarcerate a debtor who had disobeyed the charge given him on *letters of horning* to pay a debt or to perform an act.

Anciently the movables of a debtor were disposed of by public authority for the payment of the debt, and where the movables were insufficient for that purpose, the lands of the debtor were sold. The introduction of imprisonment for debt has been referred back to the excommunication enforced against debtors by the Church, which, when excommunication came to be held lightly, asked civil aid by the issuing of a *caption* against a debtor who had been excommunicated for forty days. When the Church judicatures were abolished, the Legislature found it expedient to extend the privilege of letters of *horning and caption* for civil debts, even in aid of decrees of the magistrates of burghs and other inferior judges.

Note B.—ERLIS OR ARLES.

Arles and *arles-penny,* when used in old writers, generally have the meaning of a piece of money changing hands in confirmation of a bargain. An *arles-penny,* also, was the piece of

money put into the hands of the seller as a pledge that the seller was not to strike a bargain with another while he retained the money or *arles*. To pass from the contract, one had to give up the *arles*: "Quhen arles are given and taken, gif the buyer will passe fra the contract, he may do the samine with tinselt of his *arles*" (Reg. Maj.). In the second case, the giving of *arles* prevented interference of others while a bargain was forward. This is the etiquette of fairs and markets still. The commonest use of *arles* to-day is as earnest-money given to servants. Arles, however, are not recognised by law.

Arles was used also as simply an earnest of any kind. "But, my bairn, set not your thought on riches as an end, but only as a means for something more solid to yoursel, and pleasing in the sight of Him who, in His favour, has given you *erlis* of the servitude He claims from you." These were the good Tannyhill's words to Andrew Wylie (vol. i. p. 50). Jamieson quotes a beautiful usage of *arles* in this sense:—"The heart gets a taist of the swetnes that is in Christ, of the joy whilk is in life everlasting, quhilk taist is the only *arlis-penny* of that full and perfite joy, quilk saull and bodie in that life shall enjoy. And the *arlis-pennie* (as yee knaw) maun be a part of the sowme, and of the nature of the rest of the sowme."

Arles seems to have been used sometimes to mean the earnest given by a man to the woman whom he espoused.

Note C.—THE JOUGS.

The *jougs* or *juggs*, or *joggs* or *joggcs*, was an instrument of punishment in Scotland corresponding to the stocks in England. The word is the French *joug*, a yoke. We see its use in the slang phrases *jug*, *stonejug*, for a prison: soldiers say of comrades confined in the guard-room that they are "in the jug." A common name in Ayrshire for "the jougs" is *bregan* or *bruidycane*.

The yoke was the iron collar, generally broad, and padlocked or bolted, for encircling the prisoner's neck. This was the jougs proper; and it was variously placed. In the *Statistical Account* (Lanarkshire) we read: "A tall wooden post, with two cross arms affixed to it, and an iron collar for encircling

the necks of offenders, called *the jougs*, suspended by a chain at the side of it, which stood on a stone pedestal in a public part of the town. It was called the *Trone*, and goods sold in the public market were weighed at it." The jougs, or the pillory, came to be called the *trone* because the trone was the most natural place for the instrument to be placed. Fifty years ago *the jougs* in Glasgow were hanging at the cross steeple, the site of the old gaol. In country places they were set near the church—on or at the door, or on a tree in the churchyard, or on the churchyard gate or wall. They are to be found hanging still at Fenwick and Duddingstone, among other places, we believe; and those at Ceres, in Fifeshire, which we have seen, are surmounted by a rude carving representing Justice holding an even scale.

The jougs were employed against all kinds of offenders by both church and civil courts; and especially, it would seem, against women with long tongues. "She's just a randy, and ought to be set in the jougs," is the reference in *Sir Andrew Wylie.* With *the jougs* sometimes went *the branks*, or "scold's bridle,"—an iron mask which covered the head and face, with apertures for nostrils and eyes, and at the mouth a plate of iron projecting inwards, so as to press upon the tongue of the culprit. *The branks* was an instrument that was put to a cruel and barbarous use often: as in the burning of witches, when the victims had the branks put on them to prevent an appeal to the Evil One; but probably there was little more than ignominy—and the inability "to flyte"—to be endured by the offender who was *brankit.*

Note D.—WRITER TO THE SIGNET.

Clerks or Writers to the Signet were originally clerks in the office of the Secretary of State, by whom writs passing the sovereign's signet were prepared. When the forms of judicial procedure changed and writs were more numerous, they were still prepared by the Writers to the Signet, who became more numerous. At the establishment of the College of Justice in 1535, Writers to the Signet were recognised by the Act as a constituent part of that College.

Note E.—AUTHOR'S REMARKS.

As in the case of the *Annals of the Parish* and of the *Ayrshire Legatees*, several passages from Galt's autobiographical writings bearing on the incidents and characters in *Sir Andrew Wylie* are gathered here:—

Of all my manifold sketches, I repine most at an alteration which I was induced, by the persuasion of a friend, to make on the original tale of *Sir Andrew Wylie*. As it now stands, it is more like an ordinary novel than that which I first projected, inasmuch as, instead of giving, as intended, a view of the rise and progress of a Scotchman in London, it exhibits a beginning, a middle, and an end, according to the most approved fashion for works of that description. But no particular story is engrafted on my original idea, and perhaps the book by the alteration is greatly improved. It is not, however, the work I had planned, in which certainly there would have been no such episode as the gipsies introduced—an episode, however, which I have heard frequently mentioned as the best contrived part of the narrative.

The second edition was inscribed to my amiable friend the Earl of Blessington, in consequence of a remark which his lordship made to me when he was reading it. Speaking of Lord Sandyford's character, he observed that it must be very natural, for, in the same circumstances, he would have acted in a similar manner; and he seemed not to have the least idea that he was himself the model of the character. Perhaps I never received so pleasing a compliment. Of course, the story has nothing to do with his lordship; indeed, in selecting scenes and incidents for the likenesses I endeavour to portray, I only aspired to make my *dramatis personæ* speak and act after the manner of the models; just as Sir Joshua Reynolds persuaded the first Lord Duncan to stand to him as Jupiter, in the celebrated picture of Hercules strangling the serpents, which he painted for that arch-empress Catherine II., as emblematic of the progress of civilisation in the Russian empire.

Origin of the interview between Sir Andrew Wylie and King George the Third.

At the suggestion of a friend, I am induced to mention several accidental circumstances which he thinks will be amusing to my readers—particularly to give an explanation of the origin of the interview in Windsor Park between Sir Andrew Wylie and George the Third. He informs me that it is considered as the transcript of a real occurrence, and that I am supposed to have had myself a meeting with his Majesty similar to the scene described: otherwise, it is thought, his familiar manner could not have been so represented.

The supposition is not correct in fact; but the impression which I entertain of two droll incidents with the "half gilly, half gutchard" old king, has contributed to the force of the picture. Some eight-and-twenty years ago, my friends Park and Spence were in London, and I went with them to see Windsor Castle. Wyatt's great staircase was then nearly finished, but the interior scaffolding was not all removed. In looking at the construction, I got up the main flight of steps, and was gazing about when the king was announced. Before I could get down, his Majesty, with the architect, came in, and I was obliged in consequence to remain for some time standing where I was.

The king observed us, particularly myself, who was so conspicuous, and lingered with Mr Wyatt until he had satisfied his curiosity by looking at us; speaking all the time ("his tongue never lay") and looking about as he was speaking. It was evident that he spoke more at random than seriously addressed the architect, being occupied in noticing us. Something in his manner drew my attention, and from that interview, which lasted probably several minutes, I caught a durable remembrance of his peculiarities. I see him still.

The other occasion was still more characteristic of the good-intentioned, venerable man. It was on the morning of that day on which he dissolved the Parliament of the Whig Administration formed after the death of Mr Pitt. I happened to be with a friend at morning prayers in the oriel chapel of the castle. The king was there, and the late Princess Amelia, with a few attendants, besides the gentlemen of the chapelry:

in all, about twenty persons. It was a sight worthy of remembrance. The old man remained seated with an humble worshipping demeanour while the prayer for the king was said; but he stood up, and repeated aloud with pathos the petition for the people.

With this really touching solemnity, all gravity, however, fled from me. It is well known that his Majesty was very near-sighted—a defect which caused him to hold the prayer-book close to his face. Over the top of the leaves, with the sly simplicity of an urchin at school, he frequently took a peep at us; but whenever he caught my eye, cowered, as it were, down, afraid, and "conned his task" in the most exemplary manner. The way he did this was exceedingly amusing; but the worst of it was that I could not conceal the effect, and accordingly "I and the king" continued to play at bo-peep during all the remainder of the service.

To these two incidents, as they may be called, I owe those particular traits of individuality which have been embodied in the scene with Sir Andrew Wylie, and I must believe are not unlike. I know from good authority that George the Fourth remarked, in reading the description, that "it was by far the likest portrait of his Majesty he had ever seen."

THE END

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